

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

Horizon

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

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HORIZON

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Vol. XIII No. 75 March 1946

CONTENTS

PAGE

COMMENT		149
LETTER FROM DR. ZANOTTI-BIANCO		151
NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHERS—VIII:		
ALBERT CAMUS	<i>A. J. Ayer</i>	155
BRAVE NEW WORLDS:		
THE PROFESSOR	<i>Anna Kavan</i>	169
WAY OUT IN THE CONTINUUM	<i>Maurice Richardson</i>	175
GHIKA—A NOTE ON THE REPRODUCTIONS		184
OBSERVATIONS ON PAINTING	<i>Henri Matisse</i>	185
BERLIN LETTER	<i>Clarissa Churchill</i>	188
LETTER FROM VIENNA	<i>Alan Pryce-Jones</i>	194
MODERN GREEK POETRY	<i>Nanos Valaoritis</i>	205

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appear between pages 184 and 185

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COMMENT: MAGNA GRÆCIA

FROM time to time in its long history HORIZON has come forward with a plea for something or made some plan or suggestion. As these plans usually involve the spending of money for a cultural purpose, the preservation of beauty or the encouragement of art they have always met with complete failure. Nevertheless, though deeply conscious by now that we live in a philistine country at one of the most triumphantly philistine moments of world history, we must still go on making such plans; it is part of our function. Here is yet another.

Those of us who are fortunate enough to have been able to visit the Greek Exhibition at Burlington House will have been dazzled once more by the extreme beauty of almost all the objects in the archaic section. There was a period which culminated at the turn of the sixth century B.C. and which ended a year or two after the battle of Marathon, when art, religion, and life were all one, when the essential *magic* of the human personality had not yet faded into a more serene and rational classicism, and before the mutterings of Platonic duality had arisen to poison man's long love-affair with his surroundings. In this brief spring morning between Peisistratus and Pericles man was both master of his fate and exquisitely at ease in the universe. Everything depended on him except the state of grace in which he found himself, his destiny so tragically linked with that of the Gods above, so movingly entwined with the fate of the trees and animals below.

There are a very few examples of the art of this period—the age of Heraclitus, one might call it—in the Greek Exhibition. There are not very many in the whole world. Could we not find some more?

★ ★ ★

Perhaps because none of us really felt that the War is over, the question of Allied War Memorials has not yet received much attention—but if there is one place where a joint Anglo-American war memorial is indicated it lies on the battlefields of Southern Italy. Here, while overthrowing a tyranny, a great many

English and Americans died, and here a considerable portion of the world's heritage of beautiful things was destroyed with them. Let the memorial then take the form of our two governments setting aside money, labour, and some of the wonderful machinery which the war has begotten to the uncovering of new treasures to replace the old; let England take one site, the United States another and let us excavate them as perfectly as science knows how and pool the results in a common treasury, a museum of wonders to be set up on some battlefield like Cassino.

Having originally conceived this idea with special reference to Herculaneum, where it is a question of first building a new suburb for the inhabitants who live above it, but where the possibilities of finding the lost manuscripts of Livy, Tacitus and Petronius—of anything between Sappho complete, to the Autobiography of Pontius Pilate—more than justify the work and expense, we were fortunate to be put in touch with a very remarkable Italian, Doctor Zanotti-Bianco, who is now the head of the Italian Red Cross. Dr. Bianco, who was badly wounded fighting with us in the 1914-18 war, is both a musician, an archæologist, and an anti-Fascist, and during his long spell of disgrace with the Mussolini Government he was able to go on with his excavations at his own expense, and to discover, in 1940, the sculptures from the archaic sanctuary of Hera, near Paestum. He has been able to add two more names to the list, Sybaris, where modern machinery can divert the river which, in 510 B.C. the enemies of that most intelligent city, with puritan relish, had compelled to flow over it, and his own sanctuary of Hera near Salerno. (The metopes of the temple escaped falling into German hands because, owing to the refusal of help from Mussolini's government, they had to be stacked in a peasant's hut.)

The great advantage of excavating the rest of Herculaneum and the untried Sybaris is that both these names are common property. The memorial would not be a recondite and archæological undertaking but something which we could all look forward to and understand. To those who would like to extend their acquaintance with the subject I recommend the passage in Aldous Huxley's *Brief Candles* where he describes what the discovery of the Apollo of Veii meant to him at the end of the last war, or Norman Douglas' reflections in *South Wind* on the tantalizing Locri Faun.

Meanwhile will all our readers in all countries who feel that anything can ever come of this suggestion use their influence with politicians and with the Press? No copyright attaches to this *Comment* or to the accompanying letter. Please draw quite freely from both and try to circulate this idea till it reaches the men who can make it happen. We have taken enough beauty out of the world in our lifetime; for the sake of the generations who have yet to judge us, let us put some back.

* * *

DEAR MR. CONNOLLY,

During our recent conversation in London you asked me which of the excavations now possible in Italy would be of the greatest general interest; and you mentioned the high hopes which were raised long ago and are still in our day excited everywhere by the idea of bringing to light again the city of Herculaneum, buried as it was in the full flower of its life. It is certainly difficult for anyone replying to your question to divest himself of his own preferences and to neutralize the prejudices of his personal taste and of his own field of study. For example, a prehistorian would without hesitation direct you to the excavation of the whole of the æneolithic necropolis which Allied troops stumbled on in preparing an aerodrome near Pæstum. This necropolis is at the moment being scientifically explored, although only on a very small scale owing to shortage of funds. An Etruscan archæologist would emphasize to you the importance of clearing the whole of that area of Veii, where a spirited enterprise recently undertaken has brought to light very considerable new fragments of the famous group of terracotta statues, among them further pieces of the statue of Apollo itself (the Apollo of Veii in the Etruscan Museum in Valle Giulia in Rome)—or else he would propose to you the search for new tombs in one of the famous cemeteries of Tarquinia, Cerveteri (Cære) or another of the many cities of ancient Etruria. These tombs with their wall paintings and their rich furnishings have always excited not only the interest of professional archæologists, but also the admiration and curiosity of your fellow-countrymen, from G. Dennis, British Consul in Italy last century, to the novelist D. H. Lawrence, who wrote pages of such insight and feeling in his *Etruscan Places*. Others would talk to you of the

Italic peoples or of Rome and her civilization, and of the many topographical and historical problems still awaiting solution. I have always felt that among all the artistic achievements created on our soil of Italy the noblest is the art of Magna Græcia, as much for its antiquity as for the powerful influence it has exercised on the rest of our peninsula. So, naturally, I turn my eyes to the south of Italy, which still remains, by and large, shrouded in mystery. To pass over Sicily, which is better explored, what a number of buried cities there are to disinter in the extreme toe, alone, of the peninsula! Heraclea, the birthplace of Zeuxis, the laws of which were revealed to us by the two famous bronze tablets discovered in 1752 in a torrent bed; Ionian Siris, of which a fragment of Archilochus speaks, but its remains have not yet tempted the archæologist's pick; Thurii, near which were found the tombs with the famous orphic inscriptions on gold foil; Pythagorean Croton, the archæological zone of which is still all to be explored, as is Skyllation likewise, where the memory of Cassiodorus, too, calls us; Mataurus, the probable birthplace of Stesichorus, Terina, with its magnificent coinage, Temesa, mentioned in Homer.

But the most acute and fascinating problem of all is undoubtedly that of Sybaris, that rich and powerful city destroyed and desolated as early as 510 B.C. Its remains still sleep untouched in the magnificent valley of the Crathis. You remember the chorus of Trojan women in Euripides (*Troades* 222), 'Nearby, as you voyage in the Ionian sea, is the city nourished by that fairest of rivers, the Crathis. Its marvellous waters burnish the hair to a glowing chestnut. It ripens and enriches a land that abounds in men of vigour'.

Years ago, tempted by the hope of identifying the site of this ancient city—its discovery would be of fundamental importance for the history of West Greek culture and art, providing at last an absolute date for our whole chronology like that of the so-called Persian deposit at Athens—I made a series of trial trenches in the waterlogged and malarial plain of the Crathis, whereas my predecessors had directed their search to the surrounding hills. I started from the idea that a city so closely linked by commerce with Miletus in Asia Minor must have stood on the sea coast and developed round its harbour there. In fact, on the left bank of the Crathis, not far from its old mouth, where to this

day the peasants claim to be able to see, in the low water of summer, the old walls in its bed, I found the remains of a building of the Roman period. If this corresponds, as I maintain it does, to the Roman colony of Copia-Thurii, planted in 194 B.C. in the territory of the Greek Thurii, according to Strabo, it is very probable that I really hit on the site of the ancient city, since Pliny (*Natural History III*, 97) says that 'the colony lay between the two rivers Crathis and Sybaris, on which had stood the city of the same name'. One thing is certain: from the deepest level which I just reached, I extracted a carved head in tufa with traces of its original paint in various colours, datable to the second half of the sixth century. This can be accepted as the first evidence of the lost city to come to light.

At this point you will perhaps think that I mean to indicate the excavation of Sybaris as the one on which all our efforts should today be concentrated. Unfortunately, the state of the ground is such as to make the enterprise not only most difficult, but enormously costly. Owing to the deforestation of the mountains the Crathis has in the course of centuries swept down so much gravel and alluvium as considerably to raise the level of its bed and to push its mouth out seawards. Formerly the owners, and more recently the State, with its system of land improvement, have striven to embank its waters at a higher level than the surrounding plain. Obviously, as a result any excavation at once provokes a strong uprush of water. In fact, to achieve my very restricted excavation, I had to keep two motor pumps continuously at work. An excavation on a large scale would require either the diversion of the Crathis into the bed of one of the nearby torrents or a big electrical plant to keep enough pumps going. Both alternatives seem to me out of the question under present conditions.

In contrast to this, there is now no hindrance to continuing an excavation which has already been productive beyond all our hopes and still appears full of promise. I mean the excavation at the mouth of the Sele (Silaris), which I have directed in conjunction with Miss P. Zancarri Montuoro, D.Phil., not only without any help from the Government, but, in fact, continually hampered for political reasons. We discovered there the sanctuary, famous in antiquity, of Argive Hera. The amazing harvest of some fifty archaic reliefs of different dates is unexampled in Italy

and is hardly to be equalled even on the soil of Greece. These reliefs have restored to us almost complete the frieze of a small temple of early archaic date, probably of Sybarite dedication and workmanship. We have not only the ground plan of this building, but almost all its constructional and decorative parts. We have, however, among the reliefs only five of the metopes adorning the larger temple, real masterpieces of ripe archaic art, which appeal not only to connoisseurs but to anyone with a feeling for beauty, and keep us in a fever of expectation for the remainder still hidden in the plain of the Sele. This, then, is an excavation certain to give results and not very expensive, since the Greek stratum lies at no great depth and we have already identified the places where the remains are abundant.

Finally, I return to your question about Herculaneum. The dream of bringing to light the exceptionally well-preserved remains of this more educated and refined neighbour of Pompeii whose disaster it shared, remains as tantalizing as ever—it is kept alive by the thought of the Villa of the Pisos, which of itself has yielded a whole museum of bronzes, and the incomparable collection of papyri, of such importance for the history of philosophy, and it is fired anew by the most recent finds which modern scientific method can interpret so fully and preserve so perfectly.

But in this tragic post-war period in which our greatest anxiety is to secure shelter for the many deprived of it, it would be more than ever unthinkable to demolish a great part of the densely populated town of Resina. This difficulty has even in the past hindered the realization of the plan to excavate Herculaneum in its entirety, although it has been so often projected.

In conclusion, my dear Mr. Connolly, I reply to your question by putting in the first place for possible and promising excavations the sanctuary of Argive Hera at the mouth of the Silaris. In doing so, I am not, I think, letting myself be influenced by too personal a prejudice in its favour.

Even the smallest fraction of the discoveries so far published will, I hope, be enough to justify my choice.

Yours very sincerely,

UMBERTO ZANOTTI-BIANCO

[*Translated by* COLIN HARDIE]

(Photographs of some of the 1940 finds from this temple are available at HORIZON Office.)

NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHERS-VIII

ALBERT CAMUS

A. J. AYER

LIKE Jean-Paul Sartre, with whom he has much in common, Albert Camus was once a teacher of philosophy; and most of his writing carries the imprint of his philosophical views. A slightly younger man than Sartre, he has published a much smaller quantity of work, but the range of his literary activities is hardly less wide. Since the liberation he has been paying considerable attention to politics, and he has contributed some remarkable editorials to the daily newspaper *Combat*. I shall not, however, attempt to criticize his political writings in this article, which will be concerned only with his four major works, and especially with the philosophical ideas which they exemplify. The works in question are an essay called *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, a novel, *L'Etranger*, and two plays, *Le Malentendu* and *Caligula*.

'LE MYTHE DE SISYPHE'

Le Mythe de Sisyphe, which was published in 1942, is described by its author as an '*essai sur l'absurde*'. It is a short book, agreeably written in an epigrammatic style, and refreshingly free from technical jargon. This gives it an appearance of lucidity which is, in fact, somewhat deceptive; for the argument is developed so tersely that it is not always easy to follow. I think, however, that I have succeeded in discovering what are the main points that Camus wishes to establish, and I shall try to expound them as clearly and accurately as their character allows.

The book begins with the startling assertion that there is only one really serious philosophical problem, and that this is the problem of suicide. If this statement were to be taken literally, one might protest that the problem of suicide was not even the fundamental problem of moral philosophy; and that, in any case, moral philosophy was not the most interesting or important branch of the subject. It soon becomes clear, however, that what Camus here has in mind is not any moral question about the justification of suicide, but the metaphysical question whether life is worth

living, and that it is only if this metaphysical question is answered negatively that the question of suicide becomes, in his view, a serious problem. Furthermore, his interest in suicide is directed, not to its moral, but to what he would call its logical aspect. For his purpose is to determine whether the discovery that life has no meaning entails the commission of suicide as a logical consequence. He remarks that in matters of this kind it is very difficult to carry logic to its ultimate conclusion, but that he is none the less determined to make the attempt. A formal logician might indeed reply that he could spare himself the effort, on the ground that these were questions with which logic had little, if anything, to do; but the fact is that when Camus speaks of logic he is not necessarily referring to a purely formal discipline. He uses the word in a looser and more popular sense, in which it applies not only to all valid processes of reasoning, but also to consistency of behaviour. Accordingly, it may be said that the object of his inquiry is first to investigate the meaning of our existence, and then, in the event of its being found to have no meaning, to consider what line of action it would be rational for one who accepted this conclusion to pursue.

I have said that the question whether life is worth living is metaphysical, not because I wish to deny that it can be treated empirically, but because it is raised by Camus in what turns out to be a metaphysical form. For under his treatment it is resolved into the question whether life is 'absurd', in his special sense of this term; and the question whether life is absurd is made to depend upon such questions as whether the world is rational and whether our existence has a purpose. And these are metaphysical questions, as I shall presently try to show.

To illustrate what he means by 'absurdity', Camus gives a list, which is supposed to be typical but not exhaustive, of the sort of occasions on which the feeling of absurdity may arise. Thus he remarks that our lives are normally conducted according to a routine which we accept without question; but it sometimes happens that we ask ourselves why it is that we behave as we do. Or again, the years pass without our taking note; but suddenly it may strike us that we have grown older, and then 'our flesh may revolt' against the passage of time. Then, too, there are occasions when material objects seem to us alien in their solidity, and there are occasions when other human beings seem to us inhuman, so

hat the sight of them fills us with 'nausea': an example given by Camus, which seems to me ill chosen, is the spectacle of a man gesticulating in a telephone box. And finally there is the inevitable mystery of death. What is supposed to be common to all these cases is the discrepancy between the facts and the claims that we make upon them: we demand that they should satisfy our intelligence, and it is because they do not that we feel them to be absurd. Moreover, it appears to Camus that this feeling is justified; for he holds that the world really is irrational, and that our existence does not have any purpose. He does not say, indeed, that the world is absurd in itself. What produces the absurdity, in his view, is the contrast between the irrational character of the world and man's desperate desire for clarity' which it fails to satisfy.

To justify his assertion that the world is irrational, Camus offers, so far as I can see, only two arguments. The first is that in logic, as in psychology, and presumably in the other sciences, there are truths but no Truth; and the second is that physics, which sets out to give a rational explanation of the world, terminates in poetry. In support of the first of these claims, he quotes Aristotle's proof that the assumption that everything is true, or that everything is false, leads in each case to a contradiction. For if every proposition is true, then the contradictory of this proposition itself must be true; but the contradictory of the proposition that every proposition is true is that at least one proposition is false. And if every proposition is false, then the proposition that every proposition is false must itself be false, and consequently at least one proposition must be true. But while this is an ingenious piece of reasoning, it proves nothing whatsoever to Camus' purpose. All that it proves is that the terms of truth and falsehood cannot be significantly applied to 'the totality of all propositions', which is, in any case, an illegitimate expression; and, in modern logic, the difficulty has been met by the relegation of the terms 'true' and 'false' to the domain of semantics, and by the division of propositions into different logical types. Nor is it easy to see what can be meant by the statement that there are truths but no Truth; for I should have thought that to say that there was Truth was merely a bombastic way of saying that at least one proposition was true. Perhaps what Camus means is that it is impossible to find a single proposition from which all other true propositions can be deduced: but in that case his statement is incorrect if it is applied to formal

logic, since it has been found possible to construct a system of logic with only one premise; and if it is applied to the empirical sciences it is trivial, since they are not deductive systems. Moreover, I cannot see that considerations of this kind entail any conclusion whatsoever about the irrationality of the world.

The reason given for saying that physics terminates in poetry is that in the process of taking the world to pieces physicists are eventually reduced to speaking of 'an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus', and this, says Camus, is nothing more than image, which has replaced other images, as the result of the recent changes in scientific theory, and is liable soon to be replaced in its turn. Now, it may be allowed that physicists make use of imaginative constructions, and that these imaginative constructions vary from time to time; but it does not follow from this, as Camus seems to suggest, that they are unable to explain the physical world. For what scientific explanation consists in is the provision of general hypotheses which not only describe the way in which events have been observed to be connected, but also serve to predict the occurrence of further events. Accordingly, so long as an imaginative construction is found to yield general hypotheses of this kind, it fulfils its scientific function; and nothing more can reasonably be demanded of it.

Why, then, does Camus say that the world is irrational, seeing that, in the ordinary sense of 'explanation', it is capable of being explained by science? The answer is that his demand for 'rationality' is of such a character that no scientific explanation, however minute or far-reaching, could possibly satisfy it. For, however far the process of scientific explanation may be carried, it does no more than establish relations between various matters of fact; and all matters of fact are arbitrary, in the sense that it is conceivable *a priori* that they should have been other than they are. Thus a particular conjunction of events may be deducible from some general law; and this law may itself be capable of being subsumed under a law of still wider generality, but the validity of the most general laws in the system will have to be accepted as a simple matter of fact; or, if their validity is guaranteed by their being treated as conventions, it will still be a matter of fact that they are applicable to our experience. Now a rational world, in Camus' sense of the term, would be one in which matters of fact were logically necessary. But since it is a distinctive characteristic of

empirical propositions that they are not logically necessary, the satisfaction of Camus' requirement is a formal impossibility. Thus it seems that he is defining the word 'rational' in such a way that it is not merely untrue that the world is rational, but logically inconceivable that it should be. And from this it follows that when he complains of the irrationality of the world, he is expressing what modern Cambridge philosophers would call 'a pointless lament'.

There is a sense, however, in which Camus' statements are not pointless, inasmuch as they have at least an emotional significance. For they call attention to a fact which Wittgenstein has described by saying that 'we feel that even if *all possible* scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all'. But, as Wittgenstein himself continues, 'of course there is then no question left, and just this is the answer'.

The same considerations apply to the questions that are raised about the meaning or purpose of life. Men can, and do, have particular purposes, and the attempt to fulfil these purposes may give their lives a meaning; but their choice of a purpose, though it may be amenable to scientific explanation, is always an empirical, and therefore not a necessary fact. One purpose may be justified by reference to another, but if anything is taken as an ultimate end it cannot be justified. For the justification of an end consists in relating it to some further end; and from this it follows that to speak of justifying an ultimate end is to fall into a contradiction in terms. Consequently, to require a reason for 'the routine of life', if this means that we have to justify whatever we happen to take as our ultimate values, is once again to make a demand that cannot conceivably be satisfied; for what is required is a logical impossibility. It might, indeed, be thought that a demand of this kind could be satisfied, if we were allowed to assume the existence of a deity; but even if this assumption were intelligible, it would not seriously affect the issue. Admittedly, if we knew, *per impossibile*, that there was a transcendent being who was responsible for our existence, and if we also knew that he had put us into the world for some reasons of his own that we were able to identify, we could resolve to test the worth of our ends by the degree to which they coincided with his. But all that we should thereby achieve would be to shift the burden of irrationality, in Camus' sense, from the world to its alleged creator. For it would be an arbitrary

matter of fact that the deity's purposes took the particular form that they did. Or, if it were held that his purposes proceeded from his nature, it would still be an arbitrary matter of fact that he had precisely that nature. It seems, therefore, that even an appeal to religion would not provide a cure for Camus' complaint; and, to do him justice, he does not attempt to make it.

It should now be clear why I said that Camus' questions were metaphysical. They are metaphysical because they are incapable of being answered by reference to any possible experience. In the ordinary way, we say that a man is rational if his purposes are such as we approve of, and his actions are adapted to his purposes; and these are criteria that can be empirically satisfied. With regard to the world, I do not think that we should ordinarily say that it was either rational or irrational, but I suppose that it would not be a great perversion of common usage to measure its 'rationality' by the degree to which it yielded to scientific explanation; and here again our criteria would be empirical. Camus, however, rejects these criteria; but, having rejected them, he fails to put any others in their place. Consequently, it is quite impossible to tell what sort of thing a world that was rational, in his sense, would be. He says that what makes the condition of men absurd is the fact that the world does not satisfy their intellectual standards: but then, so far from showing, as one might have expected him to do, what are the actual features of the world that make it fall short of these standards, he interprets his ideal in such a way that no imaginable world could satisfy it. Thus, whatever the world was like, the same negative verdict would have to be given. But this means that these intellectual standards, with which men are credited by Camus, can never be significantly applied; so that if anyone claims to be using them, the most that he can be expressing is a metaphysical attitude.

Assuming, then, that a man has taken up a metaphysical attitude of this kind, what course of conduct would it be logical for him to pursue? I find it difficult to answer this question because it seems to me that his attitude, just because it is metaphysical, would be logically consistent with any course of conduct whatsoever; but I suppose that this might be expressed by saying that he should do whatever he thought fit, and there are some indications that this is the answer that Camus himself intends to give. He does, however, also seem to consider that for a man who has become

conscious of 'the absurd', in his sense, certain types of behaviour are peculiarly appropriate, and he devotes a large portion of his book to an attempt to indicate what these types of behaviour are.

To begin with, he dramatizes the situation, gratuitously as it seems to me, by making such statements as that the man who is conscious of the absurd 'is bound to it for ever', and that he is engaged in 'a struggle without rest'. The nature of this struggle is not very clearly defined, but it is said to involve a threefold attitude on the part of the man who engages in it. The first of these three requisites is 'a total absence of hope' which, we are told, 'has nothing to do with despair'; the second is '*le refus continuel*' which we are not to confuse with 'renunciation', and the third is '*l'insatisfaction consciente*' which must not be confused with '*l'inquiétude juvenile*'. Accordingly, 'the absurd man', as Camus somewhat infelicitously calls him, will reject suicide, because such a way of escape is inconsistent with '*le refus continuel*', and he will reject any otherworldly solution of his problems, both on intellectual grounds and because it would be inconsistent with 'the total absence of hope'. What he will do, apparently, is to try to live as long as possible, and with the greatest possible intensity.

The line of conduct that Camus seems here to be recommending is what is colloquially described as 'getting the most out of life'. When it is adopted as a principle philosophers sometimes give it the more dignified title of Cyrenaicism. Among English writers its warmest advocate is probably Walter Pater. 'Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?' I have quoted this passage from Pater's 'Renaissance', stopping prudently short of the paragraph where we are encouraged 'to burn always with this hard, gemlike flame', because it seems to me to express what Camus has in mind more pointedly and concisely than Camus does himself. What is not, however, to be found in Pater is Camus' suggestion that there is something heroic about the persons who resolve to live in this way. Thus he speaks as if they were somehow defying the lightning by the very fact of placing their values in a world which they had recognized to be

meaningless. But once it is realized that the sense in which the world is meaningless is only metaphysical, I can see no rational ground for assuming that there is any lightning to defy.

According to Camus, it is in everyone's power to live 'absurdly'. '*Il suffit de savoir et de rien masquer.*' But he also holds that certain types of person are particularly conspicuous for the 'absurdity' that they achieve. The examples that he chooses are Don Juan, the actor, the conqueror and the creative artist. In the case of Don Juan he is impressed not so much by his sexual exploits, though he admires them too, as by his defiance of the Commander and, in general, by his heroic indifference to any threat of social or religious sanctions. For him, Don Juan is a clear-sighted, unsentimental hedonist who values quantity of pleasure rather than quality, and makes good his title to absurdity by being devoid alike of hope and of remorse. The actor, on the other hand, is credited with absurdity because his work is ephemeral and because he moves in a world of appearances; and, in this connection, Camus quotes with approval Nietzsche's dictum that '*ce qui importe, ce n'est pas la vie éternelle, c'est l'éternelle vivacité*'. As for the conqueror, he is depicted as one who knows that actions are intrinsically useless, but finds in them a glorification of the heroic spirit of man; and it is suggested that what he seeks to surpass is primarily himself. Finally, the creative artist is brought in as one who carries absurdity to its furthest lengths. For as Camus sees him, he knows better than to try to explain the world; he is content to describe it, and in describing it he realizes 'the last ambition' of those who think 'absurdly'. Thus, '*l'œuvre absurde exige un artiste conscient de ces limites et un art où le concret ne signifie rien de plus que lui-même*'. At first sight, indeed, this stipulation might appear to exclude at any rate most of the great novelists. For, as Camus himself admits, their work usually expresses a personal outlook upon the world, which may be described as a philosophy of life. He maintains, however, that such writers are philosophical in a sense that makes them the very opposite of '*écrivains à thèse*'. For '*justement le choix qu'ils ont fait d'écrire en images plutôt qu'en raisonnements est révélateur d'une certaine pensée qui leur est commune, persuadée de l'inutilité de toute principe d'explication et convaincue du message enseignant de l'apparence sensible*'. Thus, they achieve absurdity by refusing even to try to give their experience a meaning beyond itself; and Camus

adds that if they are consistent they will realize that even their own creative activity has no objective significance. This may, indeed, seem rather much to require of them, but it is no more than is required of the other devotees of absurdity, who are all supposed to be leading lives that they themselves recognize to be meaningless. And, conversely, Camus holds that all 'absurd men' are, in a sense, creative artists; for 'they all attempt to mime, repeat and recreate the reality that is theirs'.

In giving these examples of absurd conduct, Camus draws freely upon his imagination, and it is certainly not the case that everyone who can properly be called an actor, or a Don Juan, or a conqueror, or a creative artist, in the ordinary meaning of these terms, is necessarily absurd, in his sense. This need not, however, be regarded as an objection to Camus if it is understood, as I think it should be, that his purpose is not so much to describe the way in which certain classes of people actually behave as to illustrate, and incidentally to recommend, a certain attitude to life; and reviewing his remarks in this light I find them not only interesting but in some degree persuasive. At the same time, I do not think that they add anything vital to the general thesis which has already been examined; and it is for this reason that I have been content to summarize them without attempting any detailed criticism.

The last section of the book is devoted to the myth of Sisyphus from which it draws its title. In Camus' version of the legend, Sisyphus is 'the absurd hero'. He is represented as one who, during his existence on earth, displayed contempt for the gods, a hatred of death and an extravagant attachment to the goods of life. The gods took their revenge by condemning him to an eternity of profitless and hopeless labour in hell. He was obliged to push an enormous stone up the side of a mountain; and every time he came near the summit of the mountain the stone rolled back to the bottom, and he had to begin the task again. Elaborating this myth, Camus chooses to imagine that Sisyphus is fully conscious of the hopelessness of his task, and that he suffers no disappointment just because he entertains no hope. He accepts his destiny without having any illusions about it, and in that way he is able to rise superior to it. For, '*il n'est pas de destin qui ne se surmonte par le mépris*'. At the beginning he may have been unhappy, if only in regretting the pleasures that he used to enjoy

on earth, but in time he has come to regard this activity of pushing the stone up the mountain as an end in itself, which does not require any further justification. And so Camus rounds off *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* with the characteristic epigram, '*Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux*'.

'L'ÉTRANGER'

'*Un monde qu'on peut expliquer même avec de mauvaises raisons est un monde familier. Mais au contraire, dans un univers soudain privé d'illusions et de lumières, l'homme se sent un étranger.*' These sentences, which I have taken from *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, might serve as a motto for Camus' novel *L'Étranger*. The story of this novel is told in the first person, and its hero, if he can be called a hero, is a clerk in an office in Algiers. He, too, is an 'absurd' character in that he allows things to happen to him without trying to find any meaning in them. His story begins with his learning of the death of his mother, whom he had put in an old-age home in the country, partly for economic reasons and partly because they had grown bored with one another's company. He was reasonably fond of his mother, but he cannot pretend to feel any deep emotion about her death, and when he goes to the home for her funeral, he shocks the officials by his apparent insensitiveness. The next day he goes down to the beach at Algiers and there picks up a girl with whom he starts an affair. Later on the girl asks him to marry her, and he agrees because he cannot see any good reason why he should not; but he does not pretend that he loves her. In the same casual way, he accepts the friendship of one of his fellow lodgers. This man, who is reputed to be a pimp, has incurred the enmity of an Arab whose sister he has maltreated, and he draws his new friend into the quarrel. The result is that the narrator shoots the Arab for reasons which are made to seem convincing, as the scene is described, but are none the less almost wholly arbitrary. His own explanation is that he did it to break the spell which had been cast on him by the heat of the sun. At his trial, the subject of his callousness towards his mother assumes more importance than that of the circumstances of his crime, and it is the prejudice which is thus aroused against him that is chiefly responsible for his being condemned to death. He himself views the trial with his customary detachment, but once he has returned to his cell he discovers that he does not want

to die, and he is more deeply concerned about his chances of being reprieved than he has hitherto seemed to be about anything. At the same time he refuses to receive the prison chaplain who tries to offer him spiritual consolation. When the interview is finally forced upon him, he breaks out into a long tirade, in which he proclaims the superiority of his physical certainties over any delusions of otherworldly comfort, and he ends by nearly throttling the priest, who has to be rescued from him by the guards. This encounter with the priest appeases his anxieties, and he is left hoping that there will be a large crowd to watch his execution and that it will greet him with cries of hatred.

The melodramatic tone of this ending comes as a surprise, since nothing in the previous attitude of the hero has foreshadowed it. He has indeed been represented as one who enjoys the physical pleasures of life, but we are not given to understand that his hedonism is based on any conscious principle. On the contrary, it is his apparent lack of any conscious principles that helps to make him a 'stranger' in the world. Had he been a stranger for other reasons, he might have been a tragic figure; but to attain the status of tragedy it is necessary to have a more positive attitude to life than he is credited with throughout the greater part of his history. In so far as he is the victim of injustice, he tends rather to appear pathetic; but, even so, it is difficult to take a very sympathetic interest in one who takes so little interest in what happens to himself; and this, to my mind, is the principal weakness of the book. Its great merit is that it is extremely well written, in an economical style which may owe something to contemporary American models. In particular, the incidental descriptions, both of persons and of places, seem to me admirable. I suppose that it was intended to be a variation on the theme of absurdity; but in this respect it adds nothing illuminating to the doctrines of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*.

'LE MALENTENDU' AND 'CALIGULA'

One of the distractions of the hero of *L'Etranger*, while he was in prison awaiting trial, was to read a fragment of an old newspaper which had somehow got left in his cell. This fragment contained the story of a Central European who returns to his native village, a wealthy man, after an absence of twenty years abroad. He goes to an inn which is kept by his mother and sister, but does not

at once tell them who he is. Unfortunately his mother and sister are in the habit of murdering their guests for their money; and they treat him in the same way as the others. Subsequently, they go through his papers, and when they discover who he is they commit suicide.

I do not know whether this story has any basis in fact, or whether it was invented by Camus, but it seems in any case to have made a considerable impression on him; for, besides introducing it casually into *L'Etranger*, he has used it to supply the plot of *Le Malentendu*. I have not seen any performance of this play, and I find it hard to judge what impression it would make upon the stage, but I suspect that it would be found to contain too little action. Almost from the start it is obvious what is going to happen, and our interest is solicited by the characters themselves rather than by anything that they do. It is, therefore, a weakness in the play that only one of the principal characters, the sister, is given an adequate motive for her conduct. She murders her guests because she needs money; and she needs money because she is determined to escape from the dreary inland plain, in which she has been imprisoned all her life, and to find happiness and freedom in a country beyond the mountains, where she will discover the sun and the sea. She has no human affections except for her mother; and, in the end, she decides to hang herself, not because she feels any remorse for having killed her brother, but because her mother, by committing suicide, has taken her brother's side against her and so destroyed even the illusion of their fellowship in crime. Her last action is to drive her brother's wife to despair by showing her that neither in life nor in death is there a home or peace for anyone, that the wife's love and grief for her husband are idle and meaningless, and that his death was not an unhappy accident but a return to the natural order of things where 'no one is ever recognized'. That no one is ever recognized appears indeed to be the moral of the play, but as a general proposition it requires rather more evidence than is provided for it here.

Caligula, which I have seen acted, seemed to me a failure upon the stage, but it is very interesting to read. The plot follows history fairly closely, and some of the details appear to have been suggested by Suetonius. What is peculiar to Camus is his conception of Caligula as an 'absurd' hero. By ordinary standards

Caligula is mad, but his 'madness' is the outcome of his logic. For his logic tells him that all actions are morally equivalent, and that there is no reason why one thing should happen rather than another; and so he resolves to make use of his power, as emperor, to create 'a kingdom where the impossible is king'. He is opposed by his former friend, Cherea, who does not deny that Caligula is logical, but objects, as a practical man, to his carrying his logic to such uncomfortable lengths. Cherea speaks for the majority of men who need conventions in order 'to live and be happy'; and it is because Caligula makes a mockery of these conventions and destroys men's security that he resolves to kill him. Caligula knows about the conspiracy that has been formed against him, but he makes no serious effort to forestall it. His mistress remains loyal to him, but he strangles her and awaits the arrival of the conspirators alone. For all that he has done in the service of absurdity, he is left conscious of failure. '*Rien dans ce monde, ni dans l'autre, qui soit à ma mesure... L'impossible! Je l'ai cherché aux limites du monde, aux confins de moi-même... Je n'ai pas pris la voie qu'il fallait, je n'aboutis à rien. Ma liberté n'est pas la bonne.*' He does not resist his murderers, but he knows that death is not a solution to his problem, and his last words are '*Je suis encore vivant*'.

It is a proof of Camus' skill that he is able to arouse our sympathies for Caligula, but I think that he is mistaken in regarding him as logical. For from the metaphysical point of view which Caligula is made to adopt, all actions are equally arbitrary; and this applies to his own actions no more and no less than to anybody else's. Thus whether one follows or rejects the ordinary conventions is a matter of indifference from the standpoint of 'absurdity'; and so in turning them to ridicule Caligula is acting no more logically than if he had chosen to enforce their observance. What he does succeed in proving, by the exercise of his power over his subjects, is that fear will make men do things that they would not have done otherwise; but it does not follow from this that their normal course of conduct is, in any ordinary sense, irrational, or even that they are behaving irrationally in being governed by their fear. As Camus presents him, Caligula is a man who wishes to work miracles; but what Camus appears to have overlooked is that no event is miraculous in itself. An event may be accounted a miracle if it falls outside the accepted

canons of scientific explanation; but if we think it worth our while to adjust our scientific theories in one or other of the possible ways that will enable them to account for it, it thereby ceases to be miraculous. Thus, to realize what is casually 'impossible' is at best to refute an accepted scientific theory; and since to speak of realizing what is logically impossible is to fall into a contradiction in terms, all that Caligula would have achieved if he had succeeded in installing the reign of the impossible would have been to show that the laws of nature were rather different from what they had been thought to be. There is no reason, however, to suppose that a world that was governed by these different natural laws would have seemed to him any less absurd than the world as he actually found it. For, as in the case of other absurd heroes, the source of his discontent was metaphysical; and it is not to be expected that even the untrammelled exercise of power will cure a purely metaphysical complaint.

I have dealt very briefly with *L'Etranger* and with the two plays because, for all their literary interest, they do no more than illustrate certain aspects of the philosophical theory which it has been my main object to examine. Reverting to *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, I think it fair to add that I myself happen to have considerable sympathy for the standards of value that Camus there associates with his doctrine of absurdity. At the same time I have tried to make it clear that I should not claim for them, as he apparently does, that they were the product of an uncommonly strict adherence to logic. On the contrary, in so far as they were derived from a metaphysical attitude, I should be inclined rather to say that they were illogical. In themselves, however, they have no necessary connection with metaphysics, and there is no reason why they should not be accepted simply for their own sakes. In that case they may determine certain lines of conduct, which will be attractive to some and unattractive to others, according to their temperaments, or their moral and æsthetic tastes. Those who find them attractive may succeed in recommending them to others by pointing out their practical advantages, but they cannot, strictly speaking, prove that they are correct. For many other lines of conduct, which are based upon quite different principles, will be equally logical, and equally consistent with the empirical facts.

BRAVE NEW WORLDS

THE PROFESSOR

ANNA KAVAN

CONSPECTUS of university town; early morning mist slowly clearing. The mist dispersal not mere evaporation, but a sort of gradual unswathing, very gentle and protracted tearing, rolling-up and discarding, as of webs or excessively fragile tissue paper, disclosing buildings in careful succession. This process, though necessarily long drawn out, progresses methodically with a certain businesslike efficiency, suggesting the unpacking and setting out by a practised hand of, say, a stock of valuable china.

View narrows to disclosure, from the ground upwards, of one particular tower. As mist-wrappings are removed, there appears, on a carved ledge, a row of plump pigeons fast asleep with their heads under their wings. Then, sighted up the shaft of the tower as if from its foot, the remote rococo summit, which in a second starts to revolve, discharges a musical-box carillon of tinkling notes which dance off, frisky white minims and semibreves, into the now blue sky. Back for a moment to the pigeons, untucking themselves, blinking, sleepily stretching their wings.

Now a switch-over to an outlying residential street of the same town. Ahead, set back from the road in its small flowerless lawn garden, a new white flat-roofed modern house, determinedly unembellished, simple rectangles superimposed like a construction of nursery building blocks. A path of concrete slabs leads to the front door which has a chromium ring, O-shaped, instead of a handle. Inside, in one of the bedrooms upstairs, is a child's cot, white, with bars at the sides: a painted cock decorates the headboard, an owl the foot. The occupant of the cot lies motionless under a puffed pale blue-eiderdown. Across the floor, which is covered in some hygienic greyish composition of cork or rubber, comes a tall, brasslike woman of forty, her face somewhat like a photo of one of the lesser-known hostesses seen in society papers; looking like and dressed like a hybrid nurse and socialite; her plucked eyebrows very arched, her lips painted bright red; costumed as if for a cocktail party; wearing a mackintosh apron tied round her waist.

In a series of brisk, efficient motions she approaches the cot; lets down the side (with harsh buzzsaw rasp); bends stiff from the waist, her tightly sheathed hind parts glossy in taut satin; turns back the eiderdown. With her hard hands she reaches inside the woollywhite, lambswool coverings (peeling them off as if they were wrappings of a parcel or a cocoon) and grasps firmly, and after a moment lifts out a manikin, adeptly supported by her large hands under buttocks and shoulderblades, dressed in grey-mottled and baggy tweeds: she sits on a chair; the manikin held on her knees and balancing there, limp dangling feet turned in like a ventriloquist's dummy. The woman zips open her diamanté-trimmed corsage and pulls out a long rubbery phallus-shaped nipple which she inserts in the dummy's mouth in the style of a petrol feed.

Shot of the little pursed rosebud mouth under shaved upper lip busily sucking away (with lip-smacking and belching accompaniment). The pose held in gruesome travesty of a madonna and child tableau. While this goes on the manikin visibly swelling, swelling, swelling, till at the end of the meal he is almost a full-sized man. The woman stands him on the floor while she tucks away the flaccid phallus-teat, zips up her dress, stands up.

Slight transitional pause. Next view is downwards from landing to hall (looking down steep-diving staircase), on the two fore-shortened figures, the man's egghead with incipient bald tonsure spot. The woman hustles him into professorial gown, jerks, tugs, pats, brushes him off, takes his hand, leads him out of the front door. Through this open door is seen a sliver of venomous green raffia stage grass.

Chug-chug sound of a child playing at cars; high-pitched tooting horn; the woman reappears in the doorway, watching departure; her watchfulness holds for a second. The woman turning, coming back inside; closing the door (the lock snicks shut), ripping loose apron strings. The apron falls on the floor. Denting it with her high heels she walks over it to the wall mirror, extracts a lipstick from gold mesh bag, starts to repaint her mouth. In the mirror, closeup of her enormously enlarged brilliant moist raw-red mouth.

Now a complete change of scene. The professor has reached the college and is lecturing to his class. He stands on a dais behind a desk on which is a carafe of water and a tin trumpet. He is not

quite tall enough for the height of the desk and so he stands on an old-fashioned church hassock with flaps at the ends. To his left, on the wall behind him, a large blackboard scrawled over with undecipherable words and symbols in coloured chalks. (Conceivably some of these might be semi-intelligible words related to escapism; and one or two of the scribbles could be kindergarten obscenities, faces, figures.) On the right a phenomenally tall blank frosted-glass window rises clear from the floor to the high domed ceiling. It holds its pair of stiff white fluted curtains rigidly to its sides in arms-downwards-stretch position. Semi-circular tiers of benches rising in front. The back of each bench forms a continuous curved shelf for the books of the row above. Only two tiers towards the centre are occupied. The students are masks: upper row masculine, feminine lower. Except for the sex differentiation, which appears mainly in the length and arrangement of the painted hair, all are identical, characterless, with wide round eyes of respectful admiration, adulation, attention. The masks supported on spinal columns of spiral wire: similar wires representing arms terminated by limp chamois glovehands half stuffed with cottonwool. The hands are laid flat on the book rests with books in between; all are motionless.

The professor's voice continues in steady and wordless booming punctuated by an occasional 'Now' or 'You see'. Sudden short tinny interjection of sound as he picks up toy trumpet and blows. Followed by immediate lifting and reaching out of curtain arms gliding smoothly over the rows of limp glovehands, touching off each hand in turn, retiring swiftly to the original attention posture at the window. There is a faint twanging noise of quivering wires while the gloves are left gangling in palsied mimicry of jittery handwriting and the professor takes a long drink of water.

A resumption of the professorial booming (for a very short period this time), with attention gradually concentrating on the curtains which appear to be holding themselves with watchdog vigilance at their window post. Climax comes with the curtains coiling, the curtain tentacles extending, delicately glissading along the mask rows, turning the masks to the blackboard (the professor chalks up o); masks ghostily twitching and trilling in twisted unison; the curtain arms coil high to the ceiling, weave there; then return to the window, to stiff and full arms' length

attention at each side of window, resume the same tense rigidity as before. As the wire vibration dies down, one after another, the masks topple, tumble, tip out of sight behind the benches. As the last one disappears the professor steps down from the hassock, from the dais, walks to the door of the lecture room.

Four seconds after he has gone out of the door the left curtain slowly draws itself across half the window. The right curtain slowly crosses to meet it.

A series of transient views tracks the professor's progress from lecture room to outer door of college. His black moth-gown seen fluttering down long perspective of shadowed, tunnel-like stone corridor; emerging into high groined and vaulted entrance hall, the grey stones of the floor with faint localized stippling of amethyst, topaz, ruby, light-spillings from stained-glass windows.

Numerous indistinct indications of other figures, gowned professors, student masks topping garments on coat-hangers, wires, hockey-sticks; all flickering spasmodically in different directions; all very indefinite, ephemeral.

Finally a static black-and-white punctuation mark shot: a heavy dark ancient door under gothic arch. An old man's gnarled, unsteady, veined hand with border of frayed shirt-cuff, wear-shined and threadbare porter's sleeve, draws back the bolts, turns key, loosens chains, with rusty rasping, jarring complaint of uncoiled metal.

The door slowly opens.

First the pepper-and-salt trousers, then the whole of the professor, stepping out of the door, crossing empty and sunlit pavement in the cracks of which wild flowers, daisies, harebells, cowslips, primroses, are in bloom. A toy motor car, painted red, stands at the curb. The professor packs and stuffs and forces himself into it: settles his feet on the pedals: squeezes a captious toot out of the rubber hornbulb: vigorously pedals off. There is a squeaky noise from the chain driving the wide-spoked wheels. Short distance up street he signals with his left arm stiffly extended; turns left, disappears. The chain squeak briefly outlasts him.

Now the professor pedalling home through the quiet streets of the town: not a real life town, of course. The sunshine is filtered through pink gauze. Colleges, churches, museums, etc., like birthday cakes in the gauzy light. Cuckoos fly out of belfries and cupolas as the clocks strike.

The professor keeps on pedalling, passes the entrance to a street which is in shadow. Glimpse down this street, emphasizing its shadowed contrast to the rest of the town. About two hundred yards along it, facing another way, a mass of full-sized people crowds silently outside a municipal building, a town hall or a police station, very dark-looking, very ominous, introducing an abrupt note of alarm. The professor does not look. He keeps on pedalling.

The sunlit street ribbons on unbroken down a gentle slope with the white play-block house at the end of it. The car, without free-wheel, running faster and faster downhill; the professor's knees pistoning faster and faster, almost grazing his chin.

Inside the house the woman who appeared earlier on is playing mah-jong with three visitors. These people are seen only in profile and are feminine, bloodless; with long proboscis noses, like Javanese silhouettes stamped out of metal, very frigidly and ophidianly malignant. The mah-jong tiles forming the walls behind which they are sitting are covered with money symbols, deeds, bonds and various currencies; power symbols, sceptres, whips, bribes, reins: diapers, feeding bottles; phallic signs.

Rapid survey of this drawing room of a somewhat pretentious provincial would-be-modern intellectual. Smooth, pale, faintly glazed planes of walls, built-in furniture, unstained woods: squarish, low, upholstered couch; easy chairs covered in zebra-stripe fabric: the emasculate fireplace, without mantelpiece, without fire, meekly impounded by chaste light wood bands: wall alcoves, interiorly tinted, and displaying such objects as negro carvings and very consciously quaint period pieces, china dogs, red and blue glinting lustres, wax flowers under fragile cloches. Book shelves with volumes of philosophy, psychology, by the more superficial writers, *belles lettres*, a few novels, poems, a few literary quarterlies and art papers. There would be not more than three original paintings in pale frames on the walls: still life of the slick Slade student variety, or etiolated impressionist watercolour, or possibly smudged pastel portrait, or oil landscape in crude colour discords. There would probably be an absence of flowers in the room; perhaps a single white pottery jar of tall grasses or shell flowers.

This room the professor enters in his black gown; with light short, tripping steps advances across the neutral carpet; pirouettes;

simpers and postures. He stands holding the pose, feet in the fifth position, skirts of his gown extended to fullest width and held between thumbs and forefingers, both little fingers curled and pointing archly.

In their alcoves the dangling glass lobes of the lustres begin to swing and oscillate gently, set up a faint tinkling applause.

Now a quick circling view of the whole prosperous enclosed room dithering faintly appreciative: into this circle, very complacent, the professor relaxes coyly from his pose: acknowledging the slight rustle of handclapping from the mah-jong players, he sits down in the exact centre of the couch.

The players rise from the table, group themselves round him. The visitors (always in profile) take positions on each side of him on the couch, the third sits on the floor at his feet. From attitudes of admiration their flat snake eyes are upon him in bitter hatred, contempt, or envy. His own woman is standing behind him, her face tiger-possessive, triumphant; she sets her fingers proprietorially on his head, absently twists his thin hair into kewpie tuft.

This tableau abruptly shattered by sudden rude surge of clamouring, knocking, at outer door of the house. With utmost possible effect of shock, enormous figures, in dark uniforms, bursting into the room, crowding in one after the other, surrounding the couch, brandishing, with threatening gestures, some object (document), manifesto, indictment, under the professor's nose.

He jumps up, astounded and outraged, thrusting the three visitors aside in rising (they collapse stiffly with metallic jingle and disappear); the woman behind the sofa gestures imperiously; calls out an unidentifiable order: she is at once submerged by the uniforms; seen struggling for a moment; disappears.

The professor is ringed, pressed on all sides by the massed uniforms, fear now coming out on his face like sweat. He glances round quickly, his face more and more afraid. He clutches his gown, pulls it higher and higher up round his shoulders, hunches his neck into it, muffles his head in its folds; and out of this hiding place yells shrilly some protest or appeal, indignation in the start of the sounds, panic towards the end.

Two huge uniformed arms are extended from each side simultaneously.

They take hold of the gown, twitch at it derisively, contemptuously snatch it away.

The manikin, exposed, cowers on the floor, grovels between them, his head with bald spot lolling limp on dummy stalkneck to the floor.

As the arms grapple him every ornament in the room sets up a thin mad screeching.

A china dog leaps frantically from its shelf and dives under the couch with reversed curlicue tail between its legs.

A glass goblet falls; heavy boots trample it to dust.

The boots and the forest of dark legs close in, amalgamate into black blob-blot. The blob bulges, spreads steadfastly up and over everything; blots out the room with a bulging and bursting of black bubble, inky cuttlefish ejaculation; and the brittle death trills still bleating. Blotchout.

WAY OUT IN THE CONTINUUM

MAURICE RICHARDSON

THIS is decapitated head No. 63, Universal Institute of Cerebral Physiology, electrotelepathecasting in all directions in space-time. For the benefit of you earth-dwellers and third dimensionals who think you are living in what you call the past, I will describe my day.

It is hour 1 of day 97 year 3946—by an odd little coincidence just 2,000 years after the outbreak of the First Great Atomic War, but don't let that worry you; it didn't last long and nobody won.

I repeat: it is hour 1 and the artificial blood supply apparatus to which I am attached is standing on its bench in the Lab overlooking The Park of Giant Vegetables. The blood pump has just switched over to 'day'; it's working beautifully smoothly, giving me what they call Mild Euphoria, a rich, vital, but not too stimulating, mixture. The Lab attendant in whose charge I am is filling in my morning reaction chart, and if I roll my eyes I can just catch sight of her profile. She is a pretty little thing, one of the latest products of the Interplanetary-Racial-Cross-Fertilization Institute. On the Earth side her ancestry shows Chinese, West African Negro, Cape Cod and Kentish Weald. The Neptunian comes out strong in her aquamarine skin—I always call her Bluey. From her Venusian mother she inherits the small

pomegranate-shaped third breast and from her Uranian grandfather a striking organic feature which I hardly know how to describe to you listeners because it is, quite literally, like nothing on earth. . . .

As soon as Bluey sees I'm awake she gets busy on my breakfast. I'm not fussy like some of these Decaps who are always wanting their schedule changed. I always want the same thing at the same co-ordinate. Maybe it's because I wasn't decapped until I was what you time-slaves would call middle-aged; the Lab Super says I'm a grey head on green-painted shoulders and slaps my pressure gauge in a hideously familiar way; but what can one do? *Il faut souffrir pour être immortel*. Anyhow, my breakfast has been the same now for the last two hundred years by your reckoning: oysters washed down with black velvet, followed by durians.

The oysters come along on a conveyor that passes them one by one under the mechanical fork which is geared to an interrupter mechanism that synchronizes with the liquid-intake pipe so that every few mouthfuls there is a pause for a drink. At any moment, in case of accidents, I can interrupt the whole works by putting out my tongue; this breaks a photo-electric circuit. Some Decaps can't stand the mechanical feeder; they insist on being spoon-fed by their attendants. Poor old 33 choked and spluttered fit to burst the first time they tried it on him. He got in such a state they had to black him out altogether; deep unconscious therapy they call that; we get a good deal of it.

I'm reckoned a fast eater, so Bluey sets the dial at 5 and we're off. The motor starts up with a gentle appetizing purr; the fork pricks into the first Colchester—home grown in the Lab's sea-fruit farm—lifts it and pushes it nice and slowly towards my lips. And for the next three hours there's not a happier Decap on the bench.

When breakfast's over, Bluey detaches the rubber bag into which three gross of Colchesters, two dozen durians and a gallon of black velvet—I've told you I'm a fast eater—have dropped, and empties them down the chute. She makes a point of doing this in front of me so I'll know there's no deception. There's been a regulation about this ever since 33 complained he was being given food he'd already eaten and bit the Lab Super's thumb as a protest.

Then she slips a milligramme or two of pituitrin B into the

bloodstream to counteract any cerebrotonic cortical allergy to nicotine and fits a big fat juicy Havana into the pink rubber fingers at the end of the cigar arm.

After that we have our regular morning tiff. Bluey, who's always trying to raise what she calls my 'cultural and political level', plugs in to the Universal Brain Trust programme.

'For Marx's sake turn off that crap and give me my feely set!' I howl.

'Now, 63,' says Bluey, 'you know perfectly well you're not allowed to play with your feely set till after lunch. Lab Super's orders. You wouldn't like to get me into trouble, would you?'

'Yes,' I always come back, 'there's nothing I would like better, and you know it.'

I consider this restriction on the use of feely sets an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the cerebral hemispheres. If Decaps of pronouncedly thalamotonic type such as 33 and 25 wish to spend eternity in a feely trance, that's their affair. I may attach more importance to consciousness myself, but that doesn't mean I'm not partial to a quarter of an hour's feely-play after breakfast; I find it goes very well with the first cigar of the day. But Lab Super or no Lab Super, I'm not standing for Agit Prop from the Universal Brain Trust. After all, we Decaps have some privileges in exchange for our artificial bloodstreams that are open for any biochemist with a new molecule to meddle about with, to say nothing of the loss of our trunks and limbs. And not the least of those privileges is: no compulsory Agit Prop.

As usual, Bluey and I compromise. No feelies till after lunch, but instead of UBT a game of four-dimensional chess with Decap 81. Bluey wheels me and my blood supply down to 81's end of the bench. I warn her not to leave my apparatus standing too close to 81, while she and 81's attendant are connecting up the model continuum frame and getting out the space-time counters. You see, 81 is a biter. It's an odd contradiction because not only is he senior Decap, but in other respects he's far and away the most cortical type in the Lab; hyper-intellectual, quite rarefied, he looks down his nose at me and calls me the clubman. This snapping must be some sort of nasty little hypothalamic tic, I suppose. One time when something went wrong with the conveyor belt of the skull-scrubbing machine and we all got joggled up much too close together, his teeth met in 33's ear

and they had to black him out before they could make him let go. However, nothing can go wrong at four-dimensional chess, unless he spits at me—and that's not so terrible. He can't cheat because the whole thing is electronically controlled.

All is well. We've had a very close game lasting about three weeks by your old earth duration measurements. It's time for preprandial black-out, during which they give our cerebral arteries a high-pressure blow-through with this new peptone-plasma solution the Martian physiologists are so hot on. Then comes lunch.

There's not an awful lot to tell you about lunch except that, as with all our meals, we get the best of everything and as much of it as we like for as long as we like. We Decaps are never bothered by lack of appetite. Our palates, freed from the stomach's and liver's bondage, are ever avid, and we go on champing and swallowing and savouring our favourite dishes for days on end. On special occasions such as Gourmet Club Meets I've known lunch last a month, and it might be going on still if our jaw muscles didn't have to rest. On shellfish day, last Club Meet, I scoffed a hundredweight of assorted Dublin Bay prawns, scampi, langoustes, ecrévisses, durian-fed Venusian landcrabs, and those delicious giant Martian lobsters which you used to get in the Lake of Blood before it was drained by order of the Universal Brain. As for drink, 16, who's of a statistical frame of mind, calculates that at a little six-hour snack affair he drank two dozen bottles of old-fashioned claret, a firkin of Lunar Fungus Vino Fino, and a litre or so of the new Plutonic inorganic liqueur—radio-active but quite harmless. They make it from crystals found in the deposits left by the cosmic ray maelstroms, and it's supposed to stimulate your historical consciousness.

After the usual post-prandial metabolic check-over and a precautionary electroencephalogram to see that no brain storms are on the way, Bluey fixes the cap with the feely electrodes over my skull, inserts the 'smelly' plug up each nostril, and switches on.

This afternoon the Play Time Station is disseminating a life-size electronic model of θ 5466, the young Mercuric musical comedy actress who made such a smash hit in the spectacular

feely revue 'In a Rocket to the Moon with Ashtaroth'. Her feely dialogue is specially written for her by Peoples' Playwright No. 1. She's a very popular number with the Decaps, and as I roll an eye sideways along the bench I catch sight of no fewer than seventeen of her. Personally I'm not very keen on these Mercuric females. (May be old fashioned; or perhaps it's because I'm very nearly a pure Earth type, although Engels only knows I'm no snob, I've not a vestige of planet prejudice, but I can't see the point of all these extra limbs and appendages. I like a girl to be a girl—not an octopus. However, I tell Bluey to leave me plugged in.

I must say the kid (after all he's only 300) who wrote that dialogue knew his stuff. Writing feely dialogue is damned difficult. You have to be prepared for all kinds of reaction situations and have standard pattern alternative lines written ready to answer each one according to the electrotelepathic vibrations registered at the central feely station. No wonder the feely technicians are reputed to be such harassed types.

As a matter of fact, we get an example of how things can go wrong this afternoon. Poor old 33, who never can let well alone, says to his electronic model: 'But θ 5466, how can a lovely stream of quicksilver like you possibly love an old billiard ball like me?'

This, of course, is an easy one for the dialogue writer; he's got it all taped and typed long ago—commonest reaction pattern for all numbers over fifty.

The electronic model of θ 5466 passes a score or two of her silver-gilt antennæ lightly over Decap 33's mug and answers pat: 'Because you're wise and chiselled like old ivory, because you're rugged. . . .' But at this moment something goes wrong with the apparatus at the Central Feely Station, the needle sticks in a groove or something, and all poor old 33's electronic model of θ 5466 can say is: 'You're rugged, you're rugged, you're rugged'. And 33 thinks he's being made fun of and tries to savage her. It's a good thing he's only a limbless Decap in the Lab and not an ordinary number in a public feely parlour, otherwise there'd be a scandal and a lot of flashes to the *Universal Times* about what beasts these old numbers are and how life ought to end at 20 for all outside the physiology labs except prime numbers. Meanwhile there's hell and damnation to pay on our bench. All the feely dialogue seems to have got jammed and all seventeen electronic models of θ 5466 are squawking: 'You're

rugged, you're rugged, you're rugged'. 33's scalp starts to crackle and they have to black him out. They also have to black out 81, who's managed in the confusion to get quite a bit of his θ 5466 between his teeth. Resident physiologists come rushing in and the feely sets are switched off.

However, as I'm so calm and give so little trouble I'm allowed to tune in my telecast set to the new experimental station under the auspices of the Cosmic Historico-Physical Institute. This aims to reconstruct the so-called past by means of trapping and amplifying the electronic vibration reflection patterns. They say it'll be given a public wavelength soon on account of its high educational value, but I don't know so much. It's another of our Decap privileges to tune in on it pretty regularly, and I can tell you they've been having a lot of trouble.

This afternoon they're in a rare state of excitement; the announcer says they're catching scenes—and picking up the dialogue too—at the court of an ancient British Earth King, Charles II. Well, I'm no great shakes on history, but it all smells faintly phoney to me. First there's a hell of a blur; then we see a redhead in a cartwheel hat upsetting a basket of technicolour oranges which bounce like tennis balls. Whereupon we hear a voice yell: 'Cut', and a notice which says: 'Scene 2, take 96', and it turns out just as I thought all the time, we've got caught up in the twentieth century with a primitive British Earth film outfit making an early squawky about Nell Gwynne, a plucky proletarian girl who, so *we've* always understood, organized the Chelsea Pensioners Union and led them into action at Peterloo.

They've got a long way to go before they perfect this thing. Indeed, from what I've heard I shouldn't be at all surprised if we didn't see some of the research workers of the Cosmic Historico-Physical Institute joining us Decaps on the bench before long. It seems the history they're picking up in space-time doesn't altogether square with the stuff we're taught in poli-class. Take another little episode from Earth history, for instance, the year 1941, in the middle of the second lesser Earth war. Now we've always been taught that it was the German agent Beelzebub Trotsky who piloted Hess's plane on his famous flight to Britain, and they'd have made it, too, if Lord Claude Cockburn, the historian, editor of the famous weekly paper *The Truth*, hadn't taken off in a rickety old helicopter from the roof

of the *Worker's Times* and shot them down over Buckingham Palace. Well, from what I've heard, and you'd be surprised how rumours get around, the Institute boys have picked up the death-scene of Trot and it happened over a year before in another part of the world altogether. Seems he was clocked by a loony, one of his own disciples, in Mexico.

But that's not all. I'm told the Universal Brain has been saying that not only can you re-write history, but in these days you can also re-enact it. And he's planning to send whole armies of electronic agents out into the continuum—or back into the past as you Earth-dwellers would say—to make bloody-well certain once and for all that history ran true to text-book form. So look out for squalls in the continuous present.

I'm not saying any more about this. Judging by the stuff Bluey's just slipped into my bloodstream, I've said too much already. I don't want to forfeit any privileges. A Decap has nothing to complain of. How can he have? He's only to express his lightest whim for it to be gratified instantly. And he's never anxious or depressed for more than a few seconds before they either black him out or pep him up with an extra dose of Euphoria mixture.

It's evening now. I rather think I've been blacked out for a bit. They're closing the gas-tight roof over the Park of Giant Vegetables, preparatory to pumping in the nitrogen mixture. I sometimes wish they wouldn't grow those Vegetables quite so damned big. It's the first evening they've let it get really dark for quite a time; I remember now, the astronomers are a bit worried about a cluster of white dwarfs way out towards the edge of the galactic disc. They're going to knock hell out of their nuclei around midnight. Proton bombardment. Make space a bit less crowded. Ought to be some classy fireworks.

It's Bluey's night off. She's going to some electrical orgy or other on one of Jupiter's satellites, and is looking very taking dressed in nothing but a swarm of fireflies. I tell her to be careful she doesn't lose her body and she laughs and hands me over to the tender mercies of my next-door neighbour 64's attendant, who's got a deal too much Martian in her disposition for my

liking. 33, who's already had a brush with her, thinks she's a slapper. He suggests I provoke her so she loses her temper and then we can report her to the Lab Super. But I'm not having any. Me for a quiet time. I shall be quite happy listening in to the latest Universal Sabotage case. A space rocket carrying enough atomic explosive to blow the poor little Earth clean off its orbit, and manned by a crew of Martians disguised as Saturnines was spotted by the Interplanetary Security Police lurking in a crater on the Moon. They were immobilized by general paralytic ray and caught absolutely red handed, just in time. They had Atomic time rockets trained on the earth and a barrage of leaflets printed in Saturnine to follow. With such strained relations between the Earth and Saturn it would have touched off an interplanetary war for certain. Typical piece of Martian provocation, heavy handed but effective. We're all wondering what's behind it, and I'm very much looking forward to the trial. The preliminary examination showed that all the accused had been heavily inoculated against truth drug, so the Universal Prosecutor's having their skulls lifted off and electrodes inserted straight into the cortex for direct stimulation. They'll talk.

They've just wheeled back 62, my next-door neighbour on the other side. Been out on one of his high-speed jaunts, attached to the head of a light rocket. He says the sensation is quite extraordinary, and I can well believe it. Damned if I'd go near the things. 64 says three new Decaps are coming in tonight—all from the Cosmic Historico-Physical Institute. What did I tell you? I don't suppose they'll be allowed consciousness for a good many years yet. 64 also says the latest Solar System gossip is that the Universal Brain's decided the Earth has got senile and is due to be retired before long. He thinks they'll disintegrate it. I should worry!

Very bad news. If Bluey was in charge she'd fill me up with Euphoria right away, but this Martian oaf is hopeless and an old-fashioned sadist. The Nazis of the Universe, that's what we call the Martians.

After dinner the Lab Super paid his usual visit. I thought he looked a little odd—embarrassed about something. After he'd trolleyed along the line of benches and glanced at the reaction charts he said he had something rather important to tell us. It

appears the Universal Brain Trust has just drawn up a new millennial plan. The meaning of the Martian provocational plot has convinced it of the urgent necessity for a new and far more intense drive for increased and ever-increasing co-operation, collectivity and general oneness. In this drive we Decaps are to play an important part, 'a vanguard role' were the exact words. A research programme has already been drawn up and experimental work is to be begun at once with a view to promoting closer and ever closer biochemical, physiological and ultimately cerebral relationship between Decaps in organized groups. They will begin by blacking us all out and re-connecting our blood supply to large pumps in groups of six so that every six Decaps will share the same blood supply system.

That's only the beginning. The ultimate aim is total cerebral community. Larger and larger brains, until they get something altogether new. What good that will do, search me; but that won't stop them. They're going to try everything—electrical inter-connection, rays, surgery, cortex grafting, all the isms and asms in the ology. As I told the Lab Super, they might just as well bang our heads together and be done with it. And who do you think they're teaming me up with? 33, who's the most troublesome Decap in the whole Lab and a sex maniac into the bargain. 81 the notorious biter, 45 and 46 whom we suspect of having once been a squared couple because of the way they nag each other, and a prime number who's volunteering to be decapped so as to give us tone and cosmic consciousness—in other words a ruddy cerebral nark. Some chain gang! And of course the whole thing is an absolutely flagrant breach of our Decaps' contracts. I wish I'd got into my little bit of trouble a millennium or two earlier when they still went in for capital punishment. I wonder what's become of my trunk and limbs? What sort of head have they got on my shoulders now? A prime number's, I'll bet. I thought I recognized one of my hands the other day on a visiting delegate. Hope it gets him into trouble.

Thank the Absolute . . . here comes Bluey, summoned back from her orgy on account of the crisis in the Lab. She looks a bit dishevelled because they had to dematerialize her and send her home on the beam. Rather a lot of the fireflies seem to have gone

out. . . . But what's the sense in my making silly cracks like that when in a few days I'm going to be just one great big happy family? This is really ghastly. Still, perhaps the astronomers will go too far, explode the whole cluster of white dwarfs and negate the universe?

I don't know what I've been saying, but you're not to take any notice of it. Bluey has just given me a great big shot of Morpheus Five and I've never felt so good for the last two hundred years. The Lab Super's got a wonderful new experiment planned for us and we're all going to lose our rotten petty little individualities and be all together in a wonderful oneness.

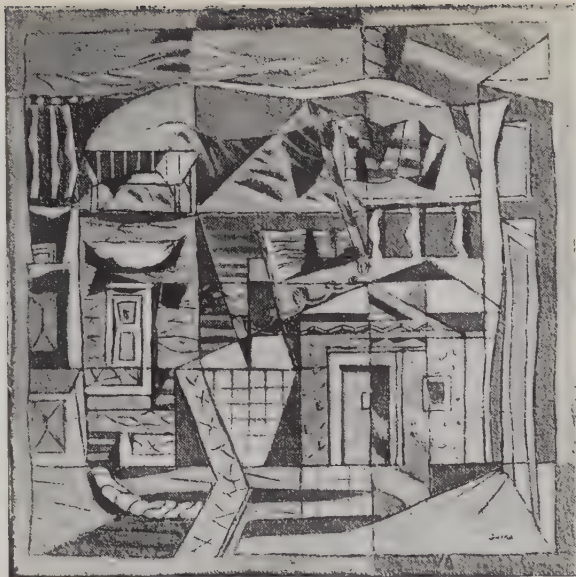
Already I feel wonderfully at one with everyone. Eyes closing now. Good night, Earth dwellers and other poor time slaves. Don't you wish you lived with us in the luminous numinous? Onwards: Forward, Sideways, Backward, Upward, Downward and Outward into the continuum! Progressive March!

GHKA

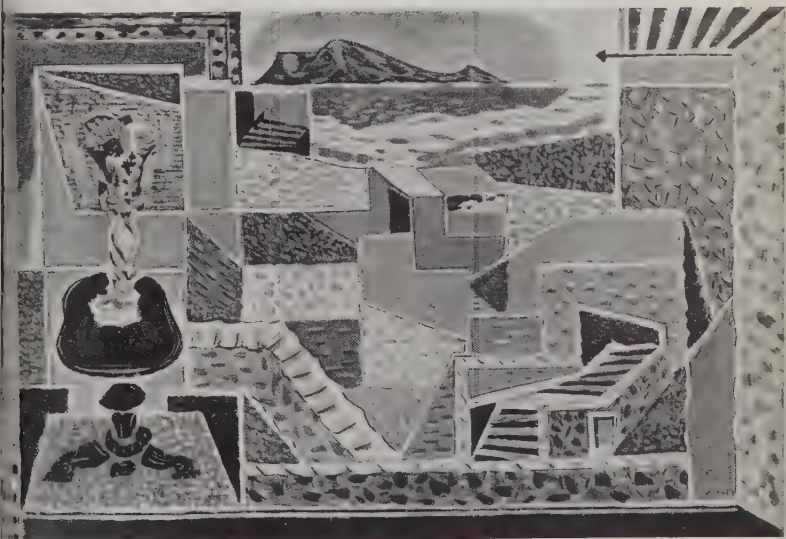
A NOTE ON THE REPRODUCTIONS

K. GHKA, born in Athens in 1906, first studied painting in that city with the painter Parthénis who had developed in the traditions of Cézanne and of El Greco, and from 1923 in Paris at the Académie Ranson with the painter Bissière. He lived in Paris from 1922, where he had his first exhibition in 1927, until his return to Greece in 1934, since when he has been working at landscapes and portraits, a selection of which was shown during February in the Exhibition of Greek Art at Burlington House and in the Exhibition of Modern Greek Art in Greek House, 32 Grosvenor Square, W.I., which opened on 1 March.

The following is an extract taken from a lecture on Modern Greek Art written by Demetrios Capetanakis shortly before his death. It was to have been delivered by Capetanakis himself at the London University in December 1943. He was, unfortunately, too unwell and it was read for him by a friend. Acknowledgements are due to Mr. John Lehmann, his literary executor, for the use of it.



GHIKA: Beflagged houses in Hydra. Tempera. 1938.



Composition Encaustic. 1939.



The Kiosk. Tempera. 1940.



Athens Cemetery. Tempera. 1941.



Girl sitting in an armchair. Tempera on plaster. 1939.

'There is no doubt that there was a revival of painting in Greece just before the war. The two most important names are Ghika and Tsarouchis. Ghika lived for many years in Paris and was interested, like Parthénis, in experiment. He is fascinated by the shapes and colours of things and his experiments in abstract art are most interesting and stimulating. In the first edition of Herbert Read's *Art Now* there is a reproduction of one of Ghika's early works as an illustration of good abstract art. When Ghika returned to Greece he was fascinated by Greek landscape and he used it as material for his experiments. The work of his I saw just before the war impressed me greatly. I feel his works to be the best interpretation of Greek landscape I have ever seen. In some of these paintings Ghika used to break the blue of his Greek sky with a black spot which had the shape of a jar or an urn. This object, as well as blackness, are associated with the depth and eternity of death. I am certain that in doing so Ghika wanted to show that the Greek landscape in spite of the limits of its form—because nothing in Greek landscape could be described as huge—and in spite of the brightness of its colours, is like a symbol of another world, eternal and unfathomable.'

HENRI MATISSE

OBSERVATIONS ON PAINTING

I CAN still hear old Pissarro exclaiming at the Indépendants: 'It's like Ingres!', in front of a very fine Still Life by Cézanne representing a Napoleon III style of cut crystal water-bottle in a harmony of blue.

When I got over my surprise I came to the conclusion—and I have not changed my mind—that he was right. Yet Cézanne spoke exclusively of Delacroix and Poussin.

Some of the painters of my generation visited the masters of the Louvre, whither they were led by Gustave Moreau, before they

became aware of the Impressionists. It was on'y later that they began to visit the Rue Laffitte or, still more important, went to Durand-Ruel's to see the famous *View of Toledo* and *The Road to Calvary* by El Greco, as well as the portraits by Goya and the *David and Saul* of Rembrandt.

It is remarkable that Cézanne, like Gustave Moreau, should have referred to the Masters of the Louvre. At the time when he was painting Vollard's portrait Cézanne spent his afternoons in the Louvre. Then on the way home he would pass by the Rue Laffitte and say to Vollard: 'I think tomorrow's sitting will be a good one, for I'm pleased with what I have done this afternoon in the Louvre'. These visits to the Louvre helped him to detach himself from the morning's sitting; for the artist always needs detachment when judging and taking up the work of the previous day.

At Durand-Ruel's I saw two very beautiful Still Lifes by Cézanne, biscuits, milk-cans and fruit in a vivid blue. My attention was drawn to them by old Durand, to whom I was showing some Still Lifes which I had painted. 'Look at these Cézannes,' he said. 'I cannot sell them. You should paint interiors with figures, like this one and that.'

Then as now the path of painting seemed completely blocked to the younger generation; the Impressionists held everyone's attention.

Van Gogh and Gauguin were ignored. A wall had to be knocked down in order to get through.

As regards the different currents in modern painting, I am reminded of Ingres and Delacroix, who seemed to be so hopelessly far apart in their own day. Indeed such was the division between them that their disciples would have fought in their defence if they had so desired. Yet today it is easy to see their similarities.

Both expressed themselves through *arabesques* and *colour*. On account of his almost patterned use of pure colour Ingres was dubbed 'A Chinese got loose in Paris'. They forged the same links in the chain. They are kept apart in our minds only by slight differences.

Later on it will seem as if Gauguin and Van Gogh also lived

at the same time: arabesques and colour. Gauguin seems to have been more directly influenced than Van Gogh. Gauguin seems to come straight from Ingres.

The young painter who cannot free himself from the influence of the preceding generation is headed for disaster.

In order to protect himself against the spell of the creations of those of his immediate predecessors whom he admires, he can seek out kindred spirits and find new sources of inspiration in the productions of a variety of other civilizations. Cézanne drew inspiration from Poussin. (To do Poussin over again from Nature.)

If he is sensitive, no painter can liberate himself from the contribution of the preceding generation, because it has entered into him despite himself. However, it is necessary that he should liberate himself from it in order to express himself, to produce in his turn something new and freshly inspired.

‘Beware of the Master with influence!’ said Cézanne.

A young painter should realize that he does not need to invent everything but that he must first of all get things straight in his own mind, by reconciling the different points of view expressed in the beautiful works of art by which he is affected, and at the same time by questioning Nature.

When he has become acquainted with his means of expression, the painter should ask himself: ‘What do I want?’ Then he can carry out experiments, simple as well as complex, to try to find it.

If he can preserve his sincerity towards his deeper sentiment, without cheating or being too lenient with himself, his curiosity will not desert him; and so, in old age, he will still have as much enthusiasm for hard work and will feel the need to learn from his youth.

What could be more perfect!

Paris, 30 August 1945

[Translated by DOUGLAS COOPER]

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CLARISSA CHURCHILL

BERLIN LETTER

To get to Berlin from Westphalia I had to cross an arm of the Russian zone. Along the Autobahn the white notice boards with their neat black lettering saying 'This is a temporary bridge . . . One track only . . . 250 Up.' suddenly gave way to striped frontier posts and clusters of Russian flags and painted staffs: from then on the route was dotted with coloured hoardings supported by tridents and flags, and bearing the slogans of Stalin interspersed with many exclamation marks. One immediately felt pleased because of the gaiety and zest of the Russians. The solid Bailey bridges ceased too, and traffic jolted over the rivers on earthen causeways.

The approach to Berlin is deceptive. In the suburbs most of the houses, standing in their coppices of silver birch, are hollow shells, but with outside walls still intact. There is about them still a faint whiff of that reassuring nursery charm which made Germany popular with the English tourist before the war, and which has always touched the hearts of the timid more strongly than any æsthetic stimulus.

As I neared the centre of the city it seemed as if I were reaching a different climatic zone, a mountain top where no living thing can survive and the vegetation gradually thins out and ceases. The gutted crowded streets gave way to a vast area as formless and without plan as a jumble of rocks on barren soil. The interior bricks of the houses have been torn out by high explosives and scorched by incendiaries so that even on a rainy day the ruins are an intestinal pink. This garish colouring spreads over so much of Berlin that my eyes longed for a change from its unnatural gaiety.

Out among the silver birches of the suburban perimeter the Control Commissions of the four Allies are housed. Living with the military, as I did, one is protected both geographically and materially from the full impact of the chaos and misery existing in the city. Waking in the warm bedroom of some Nazi's ex-home, feeling the lace-edged sheets, studying his shelf of books, even these simple experiences gave me a warning twinge of conqueror's delirium, which a short walk in the streets or a visit to an unheated German flat immediately dissipated.

The British and American Control Commissions have taken over those suburban houses which are undamaged. If the house belonged to an anti-Nazi the owners are allowed to remain in the basement, grateful that their means of keeping warm is thus assured. I found staff officers eating and sleeping in uneasy proximity to the more luscious examples of German bourgeois bad taste, slabs of brawn-coloured marble banded by turquoise blue enamel, or panels of inlaid walnut and pseudo-Bouchers. As the Allied personnel increases, more and more Germans are being turned out of their homes. These people go to swell the hordes already sleeping in halls, stairways, and cellars, even ruins. Germans who still possess a flat are sharing it with several other families, and it is said there are three people to every room in Berlin.

For the Germans the problem of heating is crucial. If they can get the wood and the heating apparatus it is possible for them to heat a room at certain hours. In theory each Berlin family is allotted one tree; in the Grönwald and the woods outside Berlin they swarm everywhere like termites, sawing up the trees and loading them onto carts to store for fuel. The Tiergarten had already been pillaged before I arrived, almost all the trees are hacked down to stumps, and the statues, which previously had their place as the centre of a *rond-point* or the culmination of a vista, now stand nakedly in a wilderness of mud. Many of the Germans are working to clear away the rubble all over the town, and I often saw bands of women formed into lines handing bricks to each other. Everybody who is strong enough wants to become a manual worker, or to work in the Allied offices, because this ensures adequate rations. Most of the capital's bureaucracy, the black-coated workers, have been assimilated in this way. Nevertheless the streets are crowded with darkly dressed people; they stick like human caviar between the pink walls of the ruins.

Extra food and all clothing has to be bought on the Black Market. A Black Market which keeps its dignity and remains more or less 'underground', betrays in those who participate merely the vices of the ordinary criminal mitigated by necessity. But the Black Market as a literal occurrence in open forum is the ultimate gesture of despair; and this is what has happened in Berlin. I wandered among the thieving, bartering crowds who gather in the open spaces of the ravaged Tiergarten, under the

monument, with its bronze Red hero on top, which the Russians have erected to commemorate their victory over Berlin. When one has before one's eyes such a scene of degradation and privation, it is impossible not to wonder what will become of these scavenging masses once the immediate pressure of day-to-day existence lightens and ceases to occupy their entire energies. That they will again take the short cut which in their opinion will soonest lead Germany as a nation to recovery is only natural.

Right in among the ruins of Berlin an unnaturally elaborate cultural life has been dragged to its feet and kept going by the Allies. Casts and Orchestras have been purged, patched up, and sent onto the stage for the benefit of shivering Germans or stolid Allied soldiery. Last autumn, when the stench of human bodies still hung about the ruins, the Russians staged a brilliant opening for the State Opera with a performance of Gluck's *Orpheus*, in the beautifully lit, red plush Admiralspalast. Russian colonels with their Russian lady friends and other Allied military with their fräuleins can now listen to excellent performances of *Eugène Onegin*, or to an anti-Fascist interpretation of *Rigoletto*, with the Duke of Mantua and his courtiers in the black costumes of imaginary eighteenth-century fascisti.

Only a few hundred yards from the Berlin Black Market, in the lovely Deutsches Theater (now called Teatr Pamyati Reinhardta, in Reinhardt's honour) there is a remarkable performance of Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, with Paul Wegener playing the role of old Nathan in a superlative but slightly hammy way. Another play recently produced was by Zuckmeyer, also Kurt Weill's *The Beggar's Opera*, and Goethe's *Faust* like an Orson Welles 1932 production, with bare boards and hysterical shouting. I was told of only one new play—by a Hungarian—produced in the Russian sector, which was so violently and crudely anti-Nazi that it defeated its own end and was ludicrous. A rival to the Russian State Opera is the Deutsches Opernhaus Company, which has now reverted to its former name of Städtische Opere and is playing to packed houses in the British sector. There is one Symphony orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, which plays in the Theater des Westens. Their first conductor, Leo Burchardt (who succeeded Furtwängler), was accidentally killed by a sentry, and they are now conducted by a young Roumanian called Celibidache, who treats the classics in rather too rhapsodic a manner.

Driving through the ruins I even discovered an exhibition of sculpture and painting. It was in a half gutted house, but at the turnstile a German sold me a glossy-paper catalogue containing twenty pages of reproductions and luxury advertisements. This extravaganza was only another example of the perpetual disproportion you find in Berlin, for the paper on which some of the water-colours in the exhibition were painted was of so poor a quality that it had fluffed up under the brush. The exhibits were depressing, and showed the same lack of innovation as the theatre. There were paintings by Carl Hofer, and sculpture by Renée Sintenis, which still belonged in spirit to the period of the twenties. There were many Braque-ish still-lives and Cézannesque villages, and some precise, uninspired sketches of bombed houses; but there was nothing new, it was harmless *Entartete Kunst*. I learnt, afterwards, that an Allied official had dutifully bought some of the paintings with a view to encouraging German art.

In the more immediate sphere of actualities, it is said that the Germans have neither the time nor inclination to read the papers. However, each sector has its own licensed and censored newspapers and magazines. There are three literary magazines, *Der Aufbau*, *Neue Auslese*, and *Amerikanische Rundschau*. *Der Aufbau* is a truly liberal publication, edited by a group of German radicals under the control of a Russian playwright, Major Shchleglow. Three issued numbers of this magazine contain the first examples of real intellectual insight into the present and future problems of Germany, and, contrary to most publications, it attempts to approach these problems in a constructive and positive, rather than a purely critical, way.

Neue Auslese is published in the British zone and is sold all over the British and American zones and in the four sectors of Berlin. Its primary aim is to bring back to Germany a spirit of universality in intellectual matters and reintroduce the Germans to international literature. The first two numbers contained articles, *inter alia*, by Maritain, Karel Capek, Edmund Wilson, Rumer Godden, and a reprint of C. M. Bowra's article on Soviet Poetry from *HORIZON*.

Although the literature, plays, cinemas, etc., of each sector are German in language and style, they bear a faint but distinguishable tinge of the controlling authority. The British and

Americans are willing to license anything that is not politically obnoxious, and for this reason if something new arises in German culture, it is likely to come from this quarter. The Russians, though they have a deep veneration for all cultural matters, so far do not seem to be interested in fostering anything new or fresh. They organize festivals of Tchekov and old Russian music, and they even dragged Gerhard Hauptmann out of his seclusion (who said Yes to the Nazi régime when it came), to make a festival in his honour, though their choice of plays and literature, generally speaking, is based on a more definite and rigid anti-Nazi criterion than is the case with the other Allies.

This brief account may appear to be an indication of something which in fact does not really exist. There is no cultural life in Berlin, in the sense of an exchange of ideas, or the development of anything new in the arts. If it existed before, then it was smashed by the Allied raids and in the battle for the city. With the fall of the Nazi party, many of the executives—actors, musicians, etc.—were implicated and have had to be dismissed. The Americans, for example, make every suspect a manual worker, irrespective of his artistic merits. (De-nazification has led to the banishment from public life of the most gifted elements of the German people, for in one way or another the gifted elements in Germany have always been astonishingly unpolitical and were consequently drawn into active or passive co-operation with the Nazis.) As for the creative artists—the painters, composers, writers—those members of the Information Services Control (the division of the Control Commission which deals with cultural affairs) with whom I talked, whose job it has been to examine their work, said that they have not yet discovered anything of merit written in Germany in the last six years.

At the present time the Germans are so prostrate, their young people so apathetic or so completely nazified (and besides, many of them are still prisoners-of-war) that the Allies have had to draw upon the older elements of the pre-Hitler era. Most of these people are worn out, totally *ideenlos*, and unfortunately retrospective in their tastes and sensibilities. Often they are repulsively subservient and lackeyish. It is rare to find a self-assured and independent thinking person among the German intellectuals, and the few that exist are generally in the Communist camp. An

example of this lack of *esprit nouveau* is seen in the theatre, where both the choice of play and the production reflect so thoroughly the now sterile and outmoded spirit of the twenties, for the Germans believed that to please the Allies they should return to the 'democratic' Weimar tradition in the theatre.

The ground which the I.S.C. are trying to reclaim, therefore, is both unfertile and full of pitfalls. Unfertile because thirteen years of Hitler have drained away all creative imagination (in so far as they can think about anything, the Germans now see cultural life in terms of trying to please their conquerors). Full of pitfalls because there is a lack of an organized plan in cultural matters just as there is a lack of common aim politically among the Allies. The whole 'operation', as the Military call it, is far from being successful and at times has nearly been a failure, though both American and British I.S.C. officials spoke with relief of the co-operative attitude of the Russians; this has surprised them at conferences, and in one or two cases there seems to be a real understanding between individuals of the three nations. As regards co-operation with the Germans, the British and the Russians, both in their own way, are in advance of the Americans and the French in this respect. The British through their inborn elasticity in working out difficult problems, and their lenience and justice, the Russians through their definiteness of purpose and their ability to organize and plan. In contrast the Americans reveal an unfortunate aloofness and self-centredness about the situation, and the French a general helplessness and lack of ideology.

The difference of aims is a prominent but not a determining factor, in Berlin there is also a multitude of purely practical reasons why inter-Allied co-operation is proceeding so slowly. Difficulties of protocol, of communications, and of language all play a part; (to travel from the American Headquarters in Zehlendorf to the French Headquarters in Frohnau takes two hours, and to get a Russian on the telephone might take a day—and between is a Tower of Babel of pidgin-French and Donald Duck Russian). But the real difficulty has been the lack of adequate personnel. There is a lot of enthusiasm and goodwill among the people working there, but few have a real insight or training, let alone taste and a knowledge of the arts. The military are not qualified for this job, and the civilian advisers who are

supposed to know their work are too few, too slow in going to Germany, and those who appear are not of the highest quality. The Allied officials, both civil and military, are in their turn depressed by the lack of interest and backing they receive from their own countries. One of them complained to me about the amount of space the atom bomb was taking up in the Press at home in proportion to news from Germany! His exasperation is perhaps not without reason.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

LETTER FROM VIENNA

Go by train from Paris if you can; it is a real civilian train, with the blue and yellow *wagons-lits* coaches we used to know. Some of the rolling-stock may be Roumanian, but at least it is luxurious, nostalgic and overheated, with the snapping light at your head, the green-backed niche for a huge watch beside it, and that immemorial trouble with the waste in the wash-basin. You will go slowly through Switzerland, peering at the loaded kiosks on the platform at Zürich, you will crawl into the French zone, and, if you are lucky, you will come to life on a sunny morning as the train drags over the Arlberg pass. Rub the steam off the window and look at those innocent brilliant mountains. They are the most normal things you will see in Austria, although it isn't until you reach the Russian zone at Linz that the illusion of pre-war travelling finally dwindles. It has pretty well gone by the time you stop at Vienna. Eastward of Salzburg, glumness strikes up like a mist. It isn't easy to define. The mountain chalets, the little towns like Kitzbühel, unravaged by the war, still offer a delicious suggestion of milk and hay in summer, of human warmth in winter; among the flatter lands of the Danube basin, however, it is the emptiness which will strike you. You will think that the farms and factories have died. There are not a great many people about and a lot of them look as if they had been embalmed. The mountains, strangely enough, have become the only human part of Austria. Then, nearer Vienna, the devastation begins. When you get out at the Westbahnhof, you will find only

a spiky shell of the station, and if it is still daylight in the Mariahilferstrasse you will notice how the lively windows, like the eyes of very old people, have become dull and inexplicit. A good many of the shops are still shut, and though the passers-by generally don't seem either pinched or starving, they have no glow about them. They don't look as if they had any clear intentions left.

You'll probably stay at Sacher's. All the good hotels are requisitioned, and Sacher's has been considered proper for the British Empire; not too modern or assertive, but intact and reliable. Whether or not visiting Blimps are responsible, it has acquired, under British management, a smell of Turkish bath. The pre-war barman is still there, and you'll see him searching among the battle-dresses for a remembered face. The haircutter, on the other hand, doesn't really remember anything since the death of Francis Joseph. And, to add a note of fantasy to the bedroom floors, there may still be one civilian left, Nijinsky. All in all, just the hotel for V.I.Ps.

It isn't much good my giving you letters of introduction, for only a handful remains of the kind of people to whom one addresses such letters. The richer and the more cautious are in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the rest are staying with friends in Tirol or the Salzkammergut. A brave minority have stood their ground and are picked out like monuments in consequence. A princess, they say, has remained in a Russian district, two countesses look over the Red Army colonnade in front of the ruins of the Schwarzenberg Palace. A few—surprisingly few—intellectuals can be run to earth. But the bombing, the capture, and the period of organized chaos which followed it, have disrupted social life almost entirely.

All the same, you'll find the Viennese immensely hospitable. You know from countless stories the conditions under which they live. You can picture the damp cold of the houses—though coke and wood *can* be got if you know how—the unglazed windows, the caprices of the electric light, the inadequate food, the constant sense of insecurity. And yet, when you have picked your way up the unlighted stairs into a cold room with a hole in the ceiling, you will be offered bread and radishes and an infusion of near-tea without any tiresome deprecations. You won't be subjected to nearly as many complaints as you would hear in Pont Street, I can promise you.

So do go into as many houses as you can. And when you are there, try to unravel the utter confusion into which most of the Austrians have been plunged by the British attitude towards them. To begin with, they never know whether they are going to be treated as a friend or an enemy. They are never quite sure whether they are being put on their feet, punished for back-sliding, forced to rely on their own initiative, dependent on charity, or simply subjects for haphazard experiment. I remember a fat captain who exclaimed: 'Whenever we're in bed, I always shout at her, "You little bitch you, I know you're a Nazi who'd stick a knife in my gizzard for tuppence"'. I remember the painful months of non-fraternization last summer and the abrupt tactlessness with which the rule was relaxed both for Germany and for Austria on the same day. I remember the British officers who, by ordinary good manners, obtained exactly what they wanted, and, with great satisfaction, I remember the recurrent bores who came up against that inexhaustible Austrian gift of polite stone-walling. It is in the nature of things for Control Commissions and Military Government offices to consist of a handful of key figures brought in at the last moment, and a supporting cast of the rejects of five years of war.

Before you go off to the country you must explore the life of Vienna a little. If only you spoke German you might start with the theatres, for it is especially in music and the theatre that you will feel the elation which has come with the right to revive masterpieces forbidden by the Nazis. By the beginning of last June the Russians had already helped the theatres and cinemas on to their feet again, and in a few months the Josefstadt was as good as it had ever been. Hofmannsthal was an obvious author to revive, and they had the courage to put on *Der Schwierige*, a painfully accurate reminder of the palatial Vienna of 1910. I wish, too, you could have heard the ceremonial performance of Mahler's Second Symphony, symbolically chosen, to mark the return of both the Philharmoniker and of Mahler's music. Or have seen the audiences at the first concerts of 'decadent' music. They reacted to Schönberg and Webern with a kind of hungry delight: not a small audience of intellectuals, either, but a hall crowded with plain Viennese families. You will find it hard to get a seat for anything, and especially for the opera. But you'll be able to impress the knowledgeable, later, by casually tipping

a winner or two. Irmgard Seefried, for instance. She is very young and confident and versatile, although you may be wise to cover yourself by pointing out what is likely to happen to her voice if she persists in *tours de force* like taking all the soprano parts in *Hoffmanns Erzählungen* before her technique is absolutely sure. And Elizabeth Höngen, an older singer of admirable intelligence. Above all, go and see them both in the smaller Mozart operas in the Redoutensaal of the Hofburg.

The bigger stars haven't arrived yet, though one or two, like Clemens Krauss, are only waiting for the Austrian authorities to overlook their political past. In the absence of international stars, then, the responsibility for providing good music has fallen mainly on Krips, the conductor, and Salmhofer, the director of the opera. With concert-halls more or less damaged in the early months, with the opera-house in ruins, scenery and wardrobe mostly destroyed and artists scattered all over Europe, the standard of organization and performance achieved by these two is astonishing. There is a further advantage in Salmhofer's work for the opera, they say. It stops him composing.

It is only when you have been in Vienna for a day or two that you will realize how abnormal everything is. This is because there are at present eight separate States inside the country. Each of the occupied zones is a separate State, each of the occupying armies is a separate State with its own language, its own social code, its own national objectives, its own organizations for finance, maintenance and supply. Somewhere in the background there is a ninth State, Austria, the chief function of which is to be talked about at meetings. Since nobody has ever had authority to define the relationship of these organisms to one another a nightmare has emerged in which artificial difficulties can be overcome only by deliberation in four languages. Suppose you are not John but Johann. You can't mend your boiler in Vienna because the boiler-works are in the American zone, you can't get to your children in Carinthia because that involves crossing two occupied zones, you can't consult the expert you have been working with because he and his laboratory have suddenly been transferred to Moscow. Or rather, you can do some of these things, but only illegally or after immense pains. You apply to the police, to the Kommendatura, to Military Government. You return to the police with a lot of stamps and signatures, you wait

three weeks, you start all over again because the police have lost the original application. And in addition to this bureaucratic delay, in addition to the constant doubt as to whether, in any transaction, you are being punished or wet-nursed, you watch, in every sphere, the disappointing spectacle of one occupying power—and not at all always the same—labouring hard to repair the ravages inflicted by another, or one branch of one occupying power putting in overtime to get round the rules imposed by another branch. It is not the fault of the Control Commission. That does what it can (and so completes an odd picture of post-war Austria) to render itself unnecessary. But the sight of its fourfold operation in a State of 30,000 square miles will suggest to you the efforts of somebody persistently trying to write the Lord's Prayer on a threepenny-bit with a 'J' nib.

This brings us to the Russians. You may even wonder whether the Commission would continue to exist if the Russians were willing to withdraw their own element from the occupying troops, of which they form much the biggest component. I forget if you have ever had any close dealings with Russians. You used to read Gorki, didn't you, and join cultural societies, and annotate the Webbs? And I rather believe you made an Intourist tour the year before Munich. Did you learn to speak? I hope for your sake you did. The most useful function any British citizen in Central Europe can fulfil today is to understand when a Russian speaks to him. And to answer. As it is, nobody understands and nobody answers. The Russians don't help. Except for the ex-prisoners, who have learned German, it is exceedingly unusual to find a Russian, of any rank, who is capable of a social effort among foreigners outside smiles and a drink. You will hear all round you the edifice of friendship being built out of such simple materials as 'Very good, vodka, I said, very good, your Moscow vodka.' 'Whisky not good.' The head is vigorously shaken. 'Whisky bad, but vodka not bad. Vodka good.' How on earth can the United Nations create confidence on nursery-talk? And is it really up to a peasant civilization to take the lead in polite conversation abroad? For it is this peasant quality which you will notice among the occupying troops of the Red Army. They are not countrymen, but peasants: slouching young men, hairy little women of massive ugliness, who bring into the ordered Austrian world a note not unfriendly but

incomprehending. The Dinkas, fishing on one leg beside the Upper Nile, the Quechua-speaking Indians of the northern Andes, are no remoter in thought or custom from Austrian and British and American preoccupations than these. And so, with the triumphs of the Red Army in his mind, you will see in your peasant a conflict of emotions, pride in victory struggling with shame at a dirty uniform, natural friendliness with the stern conventions of a conqueror, the desire to please with the desire to score off a rival in khaki. And when closer acquaintance makes you assemble your impressions you may perhaps think of a passage in one of Rilke's early letters when he says that the Russians are as fit to make revolutions as a cambric handkerchief to mop up ink; that is, that they can do it extremely well by the most ruthless misuse of their qualities.

These qualities become clearer as you get further from official surroundings. Even the Austrians, who tend in conversation to polarize the Russian character between the positive and negative of rape and fierce necessity, cannot overlook the generosity and good humour of the average Red Army man. Some of them find it much easier to get on with him than with the common run of American, for instance. And the more sensible readily agree that the constant stories of rape and pillage are exaggerated. As to the senseless destruction and defilement of objects, whether in private or public hands, from twelfth-century ecclesiastical manuscripts to rococo furniture, I personally can't forgive it, nor are the Austrians ever likely to forgive it. But I shouldn't insist on that too much. It is futile to apply to a conquering peasant army in the moment of victory standards from which all armies regularly decline.

Go round the city zones a bit. You'll find the British scattered among innumerable little messes, mostly in a kind of St. John's Wood colony. The military and the civilian usually keep apart, and the prosperous villas in which they sleep and eat are all an uneasy compromise between Kandahar Barracks, Tidworth, and a cosy north Oxford guest-house. The colonel is wonderful at arranging flowers, the major can eat porridge cooked in earthenware only, Miss Bates, who came to Central Europe for the excitement of the thing, refuses to give up her canvas bath. They go off to work in what looks like an armoured troop-carrier, in at the imperial gates of Schoenbrunn, past the mounted police and the spotless guns, up the stairs to the white-and-gold

saloons. There, at white-and-gold tables, sitting on white-and-gold and red-brocaded chairs, they sit, the seniors, and write minutes on wood-cutting and the restoration of the racecourse. They ring up Fine Arts and Monuments and demand eighteenth-century ashtrays. They fix a loan of the Habsburg plate for a dinner. In fact, they behave, some of them, as people do when they know they will be returning next year to Bagshot and a cook-general. After initial doubts, they have come to like the place. 'It's rather nice', they say, 'rather nice, isn't it', and they take visitors from the country up the hill to look back on the golden south front in the sunlight. They rather like the Austrians, too, though the Viennese are an unstable lot who seem to expect a good deal to be done for them and have already forgotten they were on the wrong side in the war. There's fishing in the zone, and shooting and ski-ing and cricket and race-meetings all over the place and jolly good music, and the club in the Kinsky Palace which is head and shoulders above any other officers' club in the place. You can show people the empty frames where the Dürers used to be. It's a good sort of life. As to the other ranks, they probably prefer Austria to any part of Europe they have seen. There is an instant sympathy between the British soldier and the Austrian civilian. So much so that in the days when fraternization was still forbidden, it was painful to watch the tug between a desire to stick to the rules and a compulsive instinct on both sides for friendship.

The Americans live further out, as it were at Hampstead. They like not a lot of little messes but a few very big ones. You won't have a great deal to do with them. In fact, you won't see much of any of your allies unless you make a personal effort. But should you come to look at the Americans through Austrian eyes you'll find most people are more grateful to them for what they give than for what they are. They are too far from the problems of the place, too home-sick, too much of a type to make much impact on the Austrians; or else they are Central European Jews whose return in American uniform is confusing to their former countrymen. Right at the centre of the town there are the French. I should say that among the occupying forces their officers were as great a success with the Viennese as our own other ranks. The French have no opportunity of ingratiating themselves with corned beef or woodbines; thus

they slip simply into place as Europeans. And, like other Europeans, they generally show a high regard for the humane intelligence. It was the French who began months ago organizing concerts, arranging the production of new French plays with the local authorities and, in a ravishing Alpine valley, working at a summer school in co-operation with the University of Innsbruck. In the autumn, among the ruins of one of the great museums, the Austrians, with French help, were already hanging Cézannes for an exhibition. And when you go, as I hope you will, to lunch at their headquarters in the Mariahilferstrasse, you will find General Cherrière and his staff talking with refreshing enterprise less of the prospects for brown coal next spring (though of these also) than of the value of Maritain's influence on modern catholicism, of a morning visit to the philosopher Kastner, of a possible revival of the *Corregidor*, and the best way to move a wine-cellar.

As soon as you are settled you must start exploring the zones. Unless the rules have been tightened up there will be no difficulty in getting into the Russian zone. In fact, there seems nothing but shortage of petrol to stop you going right through in a car to Moscow. As you leave Vienna, you will be held up by a variety of Russians wanting a lift. Corporals with baskets, staff-officers carrying a captured Mauser pistol strapped to the hip, an old colonel and his servant, any or all will try to climb in. They will offer you a cigarette which contains scarcely any tobacco in its long paper tube, and they will talk pleasantly to you whether you understand or not. I know few situations more unrewarding than driving a car on indifferent roads and smiling over one shoulder with the emphasis of the dumb whenever there comes an interrogative lilt in the talk. If you are driving into Czechoslovakia you will be astonished by the change as soon as the frontier is crossed. In comparison with any Austrian city, Bratislava or Budějovice seem almost transatlantic in their smartness and energy. You will wonder why, if these cities can put so fine a show in the shop-windows, can give so springy a step to their citizens, the towns just over the border, but still Russian-controlled, look so jaded and shabby. Over the western Hungarian boundaries, however, the same grim emptiness reappears. All this country was caught in the last spasm of the Russian war, and it is not until you get right into the British part of Styria that you find an air of relative prosperity again.

You will like the British zone. It is an unfashionable countryside, except round the Carinthian lakes. The landscapes are sterner and larger than those you used to see photographed in the weekly papers. Graz and Klagenfurt are its towns; Graz, which used to be a kind of Austrian Cheltenham, and Klagenfurt, which merely broke the journey into Italy. Here probably the Nazi movement was strongest. You wouldn't think it now. The Austrians don't like failures; hence their immediate retreat from any political system which gets into difficulties. Everybody you talk to, whether he worked for the S.S. or not, has decided that Nazism was a failure. He has also decided that he never really was a Nazi at all. Or perhaps he was a Nazi just until he saw through the mistakes of the party. And that is probably true. Party loyalties have become as little significant as old school groups. The Austrians, being the Austrians, cannot, even in this most Nazi part of Austria, understand why anybody worries about anything which failed so obviously as Nazism. You may think, however, that some of them are still going over the 1938 programme simply as an intellectual exercise, and storing it up for future use.

You won't notice much Slovene activity in Carinthia. It all boils down to the fact that after thirty years of doubt nobody in Central Europe wants to risk being on the losing side. If you are a Slovene and an Austrian citizen, if you know that a strong Yugoslavia needs you in the role of an oppressed minority, you can't be too careful, that's all. Especially when you have no idea what Austria is going to be like after the British have gone. A similar difficulty faces the South Tirolese. Can they be perfectly sure that Austrian citizenship will be a good gamble when the French move out? The prospect in this area is more attractive, however, because, while the Carinthian Slovenes have never considered themselves Yugoslavs, the South Tirolese have always clung to the unity of the whole Tirol under Austrian rule. Among the ruins of Innsbruck especially this question of the South Tirol is always coming up. It has the immediate advantage of distracting attention from an overcrowded and under-organized zone, in which the shortage of houses and food has been greatly aggravated by an influx of French families. Little towns such as Feldkirch and Bregenz are packed like sardine-tins with refugees brought up short by the Swiss frontier, and all the way back to the American zone there is scarcely a spare bedroom. There are

still villages, however, where you can think yourself in 1937. At Strobl the country houses during the summer sent their bathing-parties, smaller but otherwise unchanged, down to the Wolfgangsee just as they used to, and discussed whether or not to leave cards on the King of the Belgians. This was generally decided against, not on political but dynastic grounds. It might have been different, one said, if the princess had had no children.

You never knew Salzburg before the war, so you may not find it as depressing as I did. Josef, the hall porter at the Oesterreichischerhof, is still there, and will tell you all you need to know; but the hotel is an officers' mess, naturally, and the walk beside the Salzach is blocked by rusty transport and old iron rails. The city is more knocked about than at first sight it appears to be—you will only notice the dome of the cathedral, blown like a bubble—and again you may wonder, as you will wonder all over Europe, what precise advantage in war has been gained by the hopeful clobbering of any town with a railway-station.

I suppose in the end you will go back to Vienna. And the transport situation is so disastrous for all civilians and anyone in the army under the rank of brigadier that you will not be likely to leave it again. Oh, those captured vehicles which may get you there but will certainly not get you there and back! And the battle-scarred trucks which, after limping up from Italy, spend their last months being towed from workshop to workshop. Instead of going away for week-ends into that loveliest of countrysides, you will come to prefer staying in your billet and collating your opinions. I shall be surprised if you don't then find you have fallen at least half in love with Austria; still more surprised if you don't therefore feel uneasy about its future. For the state of mind of the Austrians is very much what ours would be if, having lost our Empire in one war, we were forcibly taken over by America and then again defeated at the tail of our new master by a world coalition. An imperial habit of mind persists long after the reality of empire has vanished; further, those who have not lived there may not realize how this habit of mind was nourished before the war by the degree to which Vienna retained her position as the capital of Central Europe. For twenty years the Austrians were caught in an irreconcilable dilemma. On the one hand the links, economic, strategic, and sentimental, which once bound the empire together,

were not totally broken at the Treaty of St. Germain. None of the secession States could prosper unless all prospered, no general prosperity was possible without working accommodations with Austria and with one another, accommodations which seemed to each to threaten independence. On the other hand, in face of this attitude of the secession States no solution was visible for an Austrian rump except an independence conditionally guaranteed by Italy, or a revival of Pan-Germanism. The war has not altered this. It has produced no new factor except the presence of the Red Army throughout Central and South-east Europe and the extension of direct Soviet rule to the southern flank of the Carpathians. In one sense, in fact, the war for Austria has been irrelevant. And the danger of a Nazi revival in Austria must be largely discounted by this irrelevance.

What makes the situation immeasurably worse than 1919 is the exacerbation of local hatred due to German brutality and subsequent revenges. While whole populations are kept scurrying from one frontier to another it is idle to talk of the blessings of democracy. The future of Austria cannot be divorced from the sharp cleavage in national development which can be seen anywhere between Bessarabia and Saxony, and among the rawnesses left visible by this cleavage nothing is more disagreeable than the complacent satisfaction with which eviction and transfer of minorities is greeted as a necessary and constructive step. Incidentally, it is in the light of these transfers that General Morgan's comments on Jewish emigration—some of which filters through Austria—should be read. If what is taking place were the kind of clean sweep which opens the way for large-scale reconstruction there would not be much to mourn except years of human misery and the suspension, for who knows how long, of Western European values. But there is no clean sweep. Desultory chaos is the rule, better disguised in some places than in others, and full of menace for Austria when she is left to herself. That is why you will keep hearing rumours that a South German republic is to be formed, including Austria, or that the Duke of Windsor has accepted the Austrian crown. Such rumours are welcomed, since they point towards a solution. Otherwise the conflict of policies within the country and the disadvantages of accepting outside aid from any one quarter are too painfully clear.

Everything depends, you will be told, on economics. And that

very nearly true. If it were entirely true, however, the Germans would have had the whole-hearted support of all Central and south-eastern Europe. You will be horrified to see how long, in the absence of one policy, reconstruction has been retarded, how much useless suffering has been inflicted by accident, how hopeless it is to try to trace an outline of the future when even the present is so dim. Fortunately, however, you are not the kind of person who classifies everybody rigidly as Nazis, Communists or Democrats; and so I expect your experiences to make you believe sympathetically that Austria, in her own degree, is required to survive in Europe, just as France and Italy and Germany are necessary. I don't expect you, or anybody else, yet to see how she is infallibly to do so.

NANOS VALAORITIS

MODERN GREEK POETRY

EVEN before the war, little was known in England of Modern Greek literature. Here and there some names of poets had leaked out, one or two novels were translated. Greece all this time had been mainly the hunting ground of the professor and the archæologist. Such people have often written picturesque accounts of the life in the islands or mountains. It was a matter for an interested traveller or an eccentric with enough curiosity to enquire deeper into the life of the country. The existence of a Modern Greek Literature with any continuity or significance had rarely been realized. The main attraction up to now had been the rich folk-lore owing to the beauty of certain popular dirges and heroic ballads. While Greece was still under the yoke of the Ottoman Empire, Goethe was already familiar with some of these songs and quoted them for their power of evocation and the daring of their images. Since 1821 the literature of the liberated Greek nation had often been obscured by its glorious past, not only in the eyes of foreigners, but also in the minds of Greeks themselves. But this is a long and complicated story of two traditions completely severed from each other, and we shall leave it for another occasion. The main object of this article will

be the introduction of the reader into the atmosphere of modern Greek poetry as it has developed between the two wars and as it has emerged now out of this War.

The Surrealist movement in France heralded by Apollinaire, the appearance of Eliot in England and the poets of the 'thirties—Auden, Spender, MacNeice, Cecil Day Lewis and others, Lorca and Alberti in Spain, Ungaretti in Italy, Mayakovsky and Pasternak in Russia—have contributed to the creation of a new poetic climate, and strangely enough have succeeded in forming to some extent a common language. In most cases it has been a language of despair or violent reaction against a world too hostile and overwhelming for the artist; a world slowly disintegrating, throttled by the conflicts of industrialism, by propaganda and mass hysteria, ready to plunge at any moment into a disastrous war.

This wind that swept over Europe reached the shore of the Ægean long before Hitler's armies, carrying with it both the seeds of creation and destruction. As usual, the first people to register it were the artists.

One of the first messengers of this poetic outlook to Greece was George Seferis. He was born in 1900 in Smyrna, which was then a flourishing Greek city under Turkish rule. The son of a professor of international law, Seferis went to school in Athens and studied law in Paris, just after the end of the last war. The defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor in 1922 and the deportation of the Greek population to the mainland of Greece was an exceptionally painful experience to him. In the 'Legend', a longer poem published in 1935 composed of shorter poems having a certain sequence of form, atmosphere and treatment of mythological themes, he is constantly haunted by the vision of a world and a happiness lost for ever.

We never met them

it was our intimate hope that said
we had known them since our childhood.

We saw them twice perhaps and then they took to their ships,
Cargoes of coal, cargoes of cereals, and our friends

Lost for ever beyond the ocean.

By many Greeks he is considered to be a difficult poet. And there is surely a reason for that. His poems, like the old oracles, often convey a double meaning. The defeat of Asia Minor was not the only disaster the Greeks suffered in their history. In Seferis's

poems there is always an echo from the past. The relics of ancient civilizations, always present in Greece, either in the form of a statue, a temple, or an inscription, blend in Seferis's mind with the modern world and its conflicts in a strange contrast. The past is dead, but goes on living among us a life of its own. The modern world is alive but often resounds even emptier and more unreal than the past. And thus the two suddenly become one and then it is difficult to discern, to choose.

I woke up holding this marble head in my hands. . . .

It was falling in a dream as I was coming out of the dream

And thus our two lives blended and it will be very difficult to disentangle them.

Seferis considers himself to be a perpetual exile. Since he joined the Diplomatic Corps, he was constantly sent from one country to another. Nevertheless, his yearning for Greece never left him at peace. Like Ulysses, his homecomings were not always pleasant experiences. He began to feel more and more isolated even in the midst of his own people to the extent of realizing that he talked to them in one language and they answered in another. 'This world of parallel monologues', he notes down somewhere. The returning traveller says to his friend:

Why is your voice so distant?

Lift your head a little higher

That I may grasp the things you say

While you talk you seem to shrink

As if sinking in the earth.

The sensation of being completely cut off, severed, often recurs in other poems:

Westward the ocean melts in the range of mountains.

To our left the south wind maddens,

A wind laying naked the bone from the flesh.

Our house among pines and carobs.

Big windows. Big tables

For us to write the letters we have been writing to you

These many months, which we drop

Into the separation to fill it.

We all write to you the same things.

And each remains silent to the other.

Looking, each of us separately, at the same world

The light and the darkness on the mountain,
On you.

His poetry has the motionless and dream-like quality of certain nightmares. Faces turning gradually into stone, the stillness of smiles on the statues, voyages begun and never finished, the slowly collapsing mansions. And behind these symbols the perpetual and cruel landscape of hills, valleys, mountains and islands.

Our native place is shut in. They enclose it
The two black Symplegades. When we go down
On Sunday to the harbours for a breath of air,
We see, lit by the sunsets,
The shattered wrecks of voyages unfinished
Bodies no longer knowing the art of love.

The feeling of helplessness and defeat which his poems communicate have led some to believe that Seferis's outlook is deeply pessimistic. In fact he has no illusions about the world he lives in. He often complains of the difficulties of being a poet in a disintegrated age. He believes that the poems of our time resemble islands, separated from each other by the sea, but still communicating in an underground manner. That is why in his longest poem 'The Legend' he uses mythological and historical allusions as an Ariadne's thread to help the reader along, through his labyrinth of symbols and mysterious passwords.

We have moored on beaches full of night scents
With songs of birds, waters which left on the hands
A remembrance of great happiness.
But the journeys had no end.
Their souls became one with the oars and rowlocks
With the grave face of the prow,
With the trace of the rudder,
With the water which fractured their image.
The companions finished, each in turn,
With downcast eyes. Their oars
Mark the place where they sleep on the shore.
No one remembers them. Justice.

If one wants to class Seferis among the large community of poets, one can say that he is a more dramatic poet than a lyrical one. His lines have an utter simplicity, relying more on the whole atmosphere of the poetic world he creates, than on the lyrical glitter of a single verse. Once commenting on the poetry of the

Surrealists he remarked that it often gives one the impression of a paper wall, a two-dimensional façade behind which there lies a void. On the contrary his own poetry had this human note, this third dimension as if he were trying to depict in depth the sufferings and adventures of people living somewhere near us, although always beyond our reach.

The life which was given us to live we lived it
Pity those who wait with such patience
Lost in the black laurel, under the heavy planes
And those whose solitude speaks to cisterns and wells
Who drown among the voice's circles.
Pity the companion who shared our loss and our sweat
Who like the crow flying beyond the ruins
Was swallowed in the sun hopeless of enjoying our reward.
Now give us the other side of sleep, tranquillity.

In 1941, Seferis went down to the Middle East with the exiled Greek Government. He considers himself as a conscript of our time, living in a great military camp. Indeed, the world we live in resembles more every day an enormous camp, and the war, instead of throwing down barriers, has erected even more formidable ones of hatred and misunderstanding. In 1936, in his preface to the translation in Greek of T. S. Eliot's 'Waste Land', he notes down: 'The age of doubt, of anxiety and isolation is giving way to the age of necessity; what shall the spirit benefit from the religious struggles that are being prepared by the "age from orthodoxies" which we are now entering; to all it is unknown except, perhaps, to God'. This is eminently true of the world that is rising out of this war.

Around Seferis there soon appeared a constellation of other poets; Odysseus Elytis is one of the most important. Unlike Seferis he has hardly ever travelled outside Greece. He is the son of a rich industrialist family. Originating from the island of Lesbos, he has a strong lyrical temperament. In his early poetry he was strongly attracted by the glitter and glamour of the Surrealist movement. Of an essentially schizoid make-up, he tries to conceal his real poetic nature. It was his part in the movement of Modern Greek poetry to launch into a daring experiment with the Greek language. His contact with Surrealism seems to have acted upon him like a match in a haystack. The Greek language, wearied by the repetitions of a tedious tradition since

the end of the nineteenth century, was waiting desperately for a refreshing and renovating personality. Elytis saw the possibilities and grasped them. His poetry, though attacked by conservative critics, immediately had an enormous appeal to youth. Letters came pouring in from all parts of Greece by people attracted and moved by his magic personality. At one moment he even managed to obscure the severer and more taciturn Seferis to whom the approach was more difficult. Greece is still an essentially poetic country. Poetry is alive with the people in their everyday songs, either in the country or in the 'tavernas' of the cities. Poetical tournaments are still held in Crete and Epirus, by youths and singers of the simple people. A friend of Elytis says that when he once read out aloud one of his poems to a gathering of peasants in the Peloponnese, the audience was moved to tears. A critic once jokingly wondered if there is a Greek who has never written a poem at some point of his life. All this, of course, means nothing much, except that there are many possibilities for a Greek poet ready around him waiting to be exploited.

Elytis has often been accused of being too exclusively lyrical. It was complained of his poetry that he never deals with the essential problems of humanity. I am afraid that those who made these remarks have completely missed the point. The very joy of form and colour, is it not the essence of a certain kind of Art? The heroes and heroines of Elytis's poems live in this adolescent world of light and wonder.

What was I looking for when you came in the colour of dawn
The age of the sea in your eyes,

The health of the sun in your body—

What was I looking for deep in the sea caves in those spacious
dreams

Where the wind flung his feelings like foam,

A blue stranger, carving his sea emblem on my chest.

He considers light to have a mystery of its own. No one who has ever lived in Greece will contest this. The bright summer days, the sun glaring on the white houses and the blue sea, the sharp division of shadow and sunshine creates a spectrous and haunted atmosphere.

A long time has gone by, since the last shower was heard
On the ants and the lizards

Now the enormous sky is burning
The fruits paint their lips,
The pores of the earth open up slowly
And by the water that falls muttering in drops
A huge plant stares into the eyes of the sun.

Elytis is the first modern Greek to realize in his poetry the absolute monarchy of the burning sun over Greece.

Summer is a native to Greece, while the winter only creeps by like an undesired alien. Always, even behind the fiercest tempest, stands the smiling figure of the sun.

The slow rains come and the sudden hailshowers,
The lands sail by, whipped by the claws of the snowstorm
That gathers in the distance, gushing with fierce waves
The hills sink in the thick breasts of the clouds
But from beyond you go on smiling carelessly
You recover once more your imperishable hour
As the sun discovers you on the beaches
As the sky in your naked health.

Elytis, like the ancient poets, is inclined to present the elements of nature in human form. This anthropomorphism of the ancients who pictured the rivers, the sea and the trees as gods or heroes bearing a human shape, has also been handed down in our folk-lore tradition. When the sun sets, or the north wind ceases to blow, in the popular imagination it is believed that they go back to their mother. Death is personified in the ballads as Charos and in one song he has a whole family, wife and children. This very pagan element has strongly attracted Elytis. He uses it freely in his poetry. Here is a passage from 'Marina of the Rocks':

Your lips had the taste of the tempest
A robe purple like blood
Deep in the gold of summer
And the smell of hyacinths
But where were you roaming . . .
Oh, blue to the bone, hope not for a coming summer
When the rivers shall change their course
And carry you back to their mother.

Very soon Elytis's defiant and proud lyricism won over even his most bitter opponents. He was greeted at first with some suspicion because of his Surrealistic leanings. Since then his treatment of Greek themes and his Hellenic temperament have digested the

foreign influence and made him a predominantly Greek poet. Like Lorca he used the experiments of Surrealism for his own benefit. Here is a passage from the collection of poems that he published under the German Occupation, *Sun the First*:

I sang love, the health of the rose the ray of light
That alone reaches direct to the heart
I sang Greece that steps so firmly on the sea
Greece that continually sets me travelling
On naked mountains glorious with snow.

In 1941-2, Elytis fought in the Albanian campaign against the Italians. When the Greek army collapsed, attacked from the rear by the Germans, he returned to Athens on foot, with thousands of other soldiers. During the Occupation he wrote articles for the defence of Surrealism and published poems. At that time the Greek writers and intellectuals resisting the German Occupation used to meet privately, read their poems to a small audience and discuss the problems of literature and politics. Then came the liberation and Elytis published his long 'Lament for the Missing Lieutenant of the Albanian Campaign'. This poem which he was working at during the whole Occupation is the only important work of Art to be written on this already quite famous episode of the War. Again his hero is the Sun.

Go tell the sun to find a new path
Now his home on the earth is shadowed
Now he is in danger of losing his pride
With water and with clay let there blossom elsewhere
A blue little sister to Greece
Go tell the sun to find a new path.

It may be interesting to compare this with a passage from Bernard Spencer's poem on the same subject, who was then in Salonica almost within hearing of the guns at the front.

I would shut the whole if I could out of harm's way
As one shuts a holiday photo away in a desk
Or shuts one's eyes. But not by this brilliant bay
Nor in Hampstead now where leaves are green
Any more exists a word or a lock which gunfire may not break.
Or a love whose range it may not take.

If Seferis's contribution to the poetry of our time is in the language of despair, Elytis presents us a language of hope. His influence on the young Greek poetry has been enormous.

From his experiments in the use of images and words the younger poets have greatly benefited. Thus the labour of the poets that had appeared between the two wars had not been in vain.

The third important figure in the poetic movement is Nikos Engonopoulos. Born in Constantinople in 1910, he began his career as a painter. Of Byzantine extraction, Engonopoulos was strongly attracted at the beginning by Byzantine art. In his opinion, Byzantine art and Surrealist painting are closely connected. Thus his later appearance as a Surrealist painter and poet is the strange outcome of the blending of those two influences.

Before 1922, when Athens became the metropolis of Greece, Constantinople was still a great centre of Hellenism. Brought up in this atmosphere of past glory, which had acquired the stillness and emptiness of a ruined monument, Engonopoulos was deeply moved by the sight of this city. In both his painting and poetry he expresses the mystery of a ceased life, a life which is all a façade, with nothing behind it, while the invisible presence of so many deceased emperors, long-destroyed armies and administrations pervades the background. But of all this only a few shadows, a few words here and there, an occasional ghost, are the only witnesses we have.

This atmosphere of hopeless desolation and sorrow is expressed in his poem on Constantinople:

The sky is heavy and black and grants us no hope—
 I wonder if anyone knows what time of the day it is:—
 (The opposite shore has disappeared
 As if it had never been there.)
 There seems to be no one on this deserted bank
 Except me, as I stand upright with my red hair drenched
 Hanging on my forehead.
 The sorrow of love brought me to this noble shore
 And my mind is wholly concerned with a wonderful magnolia
 A proud magnolia that grows and blossoms in these districts.

Engonopoulos is a mysterious and isolated person. His first books of poems aroused the bitter irony of the critics and public. With the exception of a few friends, like Andreas Embirikos and Nicolas Kalamaris, both Greek Surrealists, he had no connections with the rest of the literary world. It was only during the Occupation that he met Elytis and the other poets. Like Elytis he also fought in the Albanian campaign, but nothing much is known

about his experiences there. The only reference in his poetry on the war is a passage from *Bolivar*, the long poem he wrote during the Occupation, which aroused the interest of the critics and won for him the unbounded admiration of the young. Because of this poem, he considers himself as the only poet of resistance, which to some extent is true. It may seem strange to the English reader that a poem bearing the title of 'Bolivar' may in any way be connected with Greece, but here we must note down that unexpected transpositions are one of his favourite methods. The hero of the South American Revolution is used by him as a symbol of universal liberty. Throughout this poem he continually transposes Bolivar from the American scene into the Greek surroundings, relating him to heroes of the Greek War of Independence of 1821, or to the Battle of Albania; comparing him with Greek towns, islands or monuments.

Engonopoulos is now living in Athens, in his studio, surrounded by his enormous and strange paintings. He works continually, as far as material conditions allow him, and has contributed many poems to various magazines—principally to *Nea Grammata* and *Tetradio*, the literary journals of the new trends. The interest around his eccentric personality is steadily growing, and he now has many admirers and friends in the literary milieu.

His poetry is often difficult to translate and certainly more difficult to quote in small passages, mainly because it relies so much on the style and atmosphere. He has developed a kind of strange prose-poem, which often provokes intense emotions, ranging from laughter and mystification to tears. One might say that he has a certain affinity with that original French writer Henri Michaux. Here is a passage from another poem:

By the lamp we have lighted

To preserve us from doom

The secret rose blossoms.

Approach here by the window

And lift the heavy dark curtains

Look

The vampires have reached the shore

There by the wooden hut where an ancient god used to live

A breeder of fish;

They have now broken into the secret arsenals

They are building new ships
To launch into the sea
And depart.

The name they gave to their first three-masted vessel was
'Earthquake'.

Nikos Gatsos and Andreas Embirikos, two other poets of this group, show a great contrast in their use of language. Gatsos, whose family originates from the central Peloponnese, is the nearest possible for a modern poet to the popular tradition. He appeared in 1943, when he published his poem *Amorgos* (name of one of the *Ægean* Islands), which caused a shock. His robust style and suggestive imagery, which is the outcome of the popular ballads, blended with the technique of modern poetry, produced a vigorous effect. Gatsos is an existentialist. It is from him I first heard the name of Sartre, whom he had noticed from his early books, *La Nausée* and *Le Mur*. Like all existentialists he considers life as a huge joke. Obsessed by what he calls 'the absurd', he has included in this poem passages of extreme beauty and solemn fun. This naturally drew upon him the violent attacks of the conservative critics, who nevertheless were obliged to admit that he was a powerful poet. He has written an 'Ode to Lorca'. Here is a passage from *Amorgos*:

What do I care about the raindrop on your brow
For lightning, I know, has written his name on your lips
For an eagle, I know, has built his nest in your eyes
But here on the sodden bank one single path remains
A path full of deceit where you must walk
And plunge into the blood before time overtakes you
You must cross to the other shore and rejoin your comrades
Flowers birds and deer . . .
It is of no use to complain
Life will be the same everywhere,
With the flutes of snakes in the land of ghosts
With the song of the robbers in a forest of perfumes
With the knife of sorrow on the cheek of hope
With the grief of Spring in the heart of a night-bird
If only a plough could be found and a sharp scythe in a
joyful hand
If only there should blossom
Some corn for the festivals, some wine for memory, some
water for dust.

Andreas Embirikos on the other hand, is very far from the popular tradition. A psycho-analyst by profession and a friend of André Breton, he was the first to introduce orthodox Surrealism in Greece. It was in his house that during the occupation we used to gather and read our poems. He draws his material from that curious erudite tradition in Greek literature, which has been so completely severed for centuries from the popular language. His poetry is full of lyrical passion which, moulding itself in the expert hands of the scientific analyst, becomes a lesson of health. Here is a passage of his poem in prose, 'The Playground', dedicated to his former wife, Matsie Andreou, who is also a poet:

You were like a silence pierced by the wind. But I had healed your wound and the words we said brought us so near to each other that the silence and the void of the days before we met entirely disappeared. The playground of our meeting which then became the playground of our love, others do not approach. You are good and your beauty transcends the limits of the city and reaches the foothills of my past loneliness, the loneliness you abolished. Yes, others do not approach this playground. I am close to you and I inhabit your hopes as you inhabit my eyelids when I sleep. . . . That is why I shall never sell this playground, but I shall keep it with all its stones, all its diamonds and ornaments and let the others seek what they seek in their own Lydian stone.

Though Greece has emerged out of this war completely crippled, her ships sunk, her trains gone, her industry immobilized, she has been considerably enriched poetically and artistically. Artists like Elytis, Seferis, Engonopoulos, Gatsos, and Embirikos have created around them a new atmosphere and pointed out the new directions. Though all these poets greatly differ both in temperament and outlook, they complete each other in many aspects. The low and simple voice of Seferis, the shining poetry of Elytis, and the alternatively meticulous and passionate manner of Engonopoulos incorporated into the whole Greek atmosphere, are only the continuation of perhaps the oldest poetical tradition in Europe. The enormous responsibility of merely being a Greek has weighed heavily on many generations of poets, and was the cause of their many difficulties. On the other hand it has provided unlimited resources and ample room for surprises. In the history of Greek literature there have been long stretches of silence; but always out of the blue, poets have reappeared.



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